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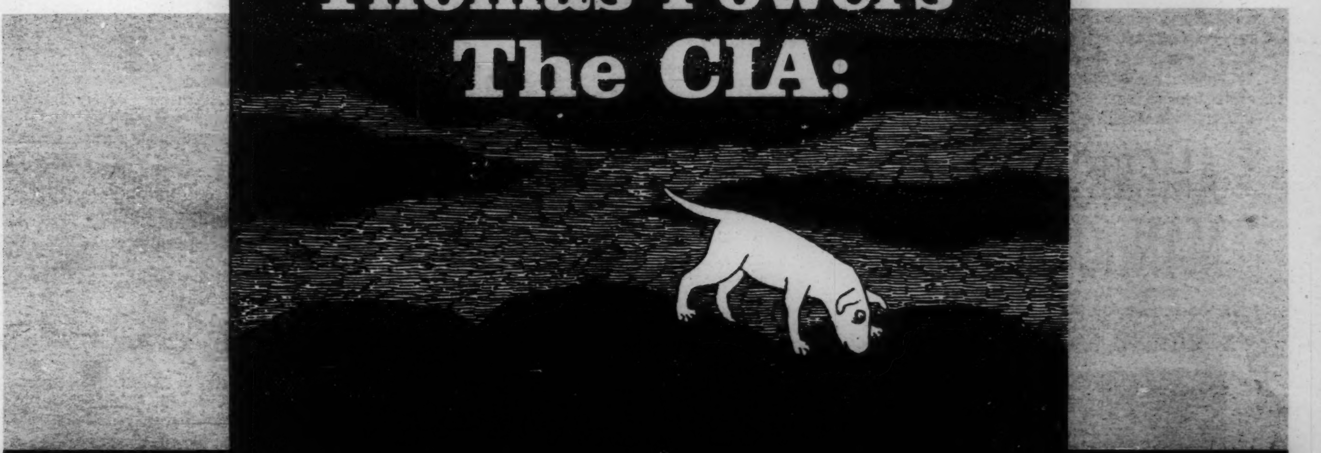

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The Balkan Tragedy

The Fall of Yugoslavia:
The Third Balkan War
by Misha Glenny.
Penguin, 193 pp., $10.00 (paper)

The Destruction of Yugoslavia:
Tracking the Break-up, 1980–92
by Branka Magaš.
Verso, 366 pp., $64.95; $19.95 (paper)

The Balkan Express:
Fragments from the Other Side of War
by Slavenka Drakulić.
Norton, 146 pp., $19.95

Michael Ignatieff

Since the summer of 1991, at least 50,000 people, most of them civilians, have been killed in the former Yugoslavia and at least a million more have been turned into refugees. After two-and-a-half years of fighting, a comprehensible explanation for the carnage still eludes most observers. The outside world's unspoken conviction, as it watches the unfolding savagery, is that all the parties must be, in differing degrees, insane. This belief comes in both simple and complicated forms, ranging from the sweeping finality of "they're all fucked," which I heard from a Canadian UN soldier trying to keep Serbs and Croats apart at a UNPROFOR checkpoint, to visiting journalists' speculation on the irrational strain throughout Balkan history.

The Balkans depicted in Robert Kaplan's recent book, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History,*[1] for example, are a dark zone haunted by ghosts of violence and fanaticism. "Here men have been isolated by poverty and ethnic rivalry," he writes, "dooming them to hate. Here politics has been reduced to a level of near anarchy...." The tone is familiar from better books, notably Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (1941) and John Reed's *The War in Eastern Europe* (1916). The doom-laden approach purports to illuminate the present by delving into the past. In reality, it straightens out the meandering paths of the Balkan past into the more circumscribed tracks of destiny.

Nationalists everywhere turn the historical record into a narrative of self-justification. In the Balkans, the contestants have a particular interest in turning their history into fate, so that the past can then serve to explain away their hatreds. But there is no reason why outside observers should do the same.

Westerners often assert, for example, that the roots of the antagonisms in the Balkans lie in the fact that the Croats are Catholic, European, and Austro-Hungarian in origin, while the Serbs are essentially Orthodox, Byzantine Slav, with an added tinge of Turkish cruelty and indolence. The Sava and Danube rivers, which serve as borders between Croatia and Serbia, once demarcated the boundary between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. If this historical fault-line is emphasized often enough, the conflict between Serbs and Croats can be seen as inevitable. Yet it is not how the past dictates to the present, but how the present manipulates the past which seems decisive in the Balkans. The Croats' insistence, for example, that they belong to Europe, because they once belonged to Austria-Hungary, is also a way of saying: we're not those backward Balkan Serbs.

In Croatia, Franjo Tudjman's ruling HDZ Party asserts that it is a Western-style political movement on the model of the Bavarian Christian Democrats. Actually, the Tudjman state resembles Milosevic's regime much more than either resembles a Western European government. They are both one-party states, democratic only in the sense that their leaders ratify their power by manipulating populist emotion.

Photograph © Sygma/Patrick Robert

Sarajevo, August 1992

Freud once argued that the smaller the difference between two people the larger it was bound to loom in their imaginations. This effect, which he called the narcissism of minor difference, is especially visible in the Balkans. An outsider who travels the highway between Zagreb and Belgrade is struck not by the decisive historical fault-line which falls across the lush Slavonian plain but by the opposite. Serbs and Croats speak the same language, give or take a few hundred words, and have shared the same village way of life for centuries. While one is Catholic, the other Orthodox, urbanization and industrialization have reduced the importance of religious differences. As Misha Glenny points out in *The Fall of Yugoslavia,* the war between Serbs and Croats in 1991 was not driven by irreducible historical or ethnic differences. Rather it was ignited by nationalist ideologues who turned the narcissism of minor difference into the monstrous fable that the people on the other side were genocidal killers, while they themselves were blameless victims. What is truly difficult to understand about the Balkan tragedy is how such nationalist lies ever managed to take root in the soil of a shared village existence. No more poignant proof of the intertwining of Croat and Serb ethnic tissue can be found than ethnic cleansing itself. When both sides began cleansing villages in 1991, they often dynamited or shelled every second house. It cannot be repeated too often that these people were neighbors, friends, and spouses, not inhabitants of different ethnic planets. Misha Glenny argues that it was precisely because they were brothers and recognized each other across the barricades that the fighting so often degenerated into atrocity, for example into horrible acts of facial mutilation.

In order for war to occur, nationalists had to convince neighbors and friends that in reality they had been massacring each other since time immemorial. But history has no such lesson to teach. The different sides were kept apart for much of their past in separate empires and kingdoms. The killing began only in 1928 with the assassination of Croat politicians in the Belgrade parliament. This in turn set off the slide into ethnic warfare during World War II. While the present conflict is certainly a continuation of the civil war of 1941–1945, this explains little, for one still has to account for the nearly fifty years of ethnic peace in between. These years were not merely a truce. Even sworn enemies on either side still cannot satisfactorily explain why the peace fell apart.

Moreover, it is a fallacy to regard the current conflict as the product of some uniquely Balkan viciousness. All of the delusions that have turned neighbors into enemies have been imports of Western European origin. Modern Serbian nationalism dates back to a Byronic style of national uprising against the Turks, while the nineteenth-century Croatian nationalist ideologue, Starcevic, derived the idea of an ethnically pure Croatian state indirectly from the German Romantics. The misery of the Balkan people does not derive from their home-grown irrationality, but from the pathetic longing to be good Europeans, that is, to import the West's most murderous ideological fashions. These fashions proved fatal in the Balkans, because the very idea of national self-determination could only be realized by destroying the multiethnic Balkan reality in the name of the violent dream of ethnic purity.

Even genocide is not some ghastly local specialty, but an import from the grand Western European tradition. Ante Pavelic's wartime Ustashe regime, which Serbs mistakenly regard as the true face of Croatian nationalism, couldn't have lasted a day in office without the armed backing of the German fascist regime, not to mention the tacit approval of that eminently European authority, the Catholic Church.

In effect, therefore, the "West" is making excuses for itself when it dismisses the Balkans as a subrational zone of intractable fanaticism; or when it insists that local ethnic hatreds were so rooted in history that their explosion into violence in 1991 was inevitable. On the contrary, the Balkan peoples had to be transformed from neighbors into enemies, just as the whole region had to be turned from a model of interethnic peace into a nightmare from the pages of Thomas Hobbes.

Mention of Hobbes should help to point us toward a more convincing explanation of the catastrophe. For as Hobbes understood, no emotion is more likely to generate ethnic and religious hatred than fear. By 1990, post-Titoist Yugoslavia had become a Hobbesian world, a state of nature in which the means of violence were too widely distributed to afford anyone safety, especially those who found themselves a minority in the successor republics. Interethnic accommodation depended on the existence of a multiethnic state. When this disintegrated, society rapidly decomposed into its primary national elements, since these alone appeared to promise the Hobbesian minimum of security.

As Branka Magas, a Croatian historian who lives in London, observes, Tito's achievement was to create a state which accomplished the peaceful national unification of the six major peoples of the region. Multiethnic federalism was the only peaceful way such a unification could have been achieved. For Serbs or Croats to unify their nation would have required the forcible movement of populations, for as much as a quarter of the Croat and Serb populations had always lived outside the borders of their republics. Tito understood this and created an intricate ethnic balance which, among other things, reduced Serbian influence at the heart of the federal system in Belgrade, while promoting Serbs to positions of power in Croatia.

Tito's strategy, built as it was on a personal dictatorship, could not have survived beyond his death in 1980. Even by the early 1970s, his socialist rhetoric of "brotherhood and unity" was falling on deaf ears. In 1974, he compromised with nationalism, allowing the republics greater autonomy in a new constitution. By the end of his reign, however, the League of Communists, instead of counterbalancing the ethnic clientism among elites in the republics, was itself

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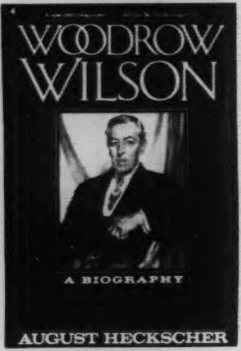
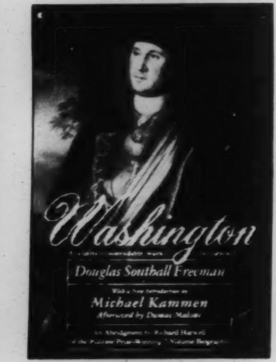
[1] St. Martin's Press, 1993.





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splitting up on ethnic lines.

This fragmentation was inevitable, given Tito's failure to allow the emergence of civic- rather than ethnic-based party competition. Had Tito allowed a citizens' politics in the Sixties or Seventies, a non-ethnic principle of political affiliation might have taken root. But as Milovan Djilas correctly foresaw, the great anti-Stalinist turned out to be a Stalinist in the end. By refusing to allow democracy, Tito only delayed his regime's collapse while guaranteeing that nationalism would be the only available language of political appeal for his successors. Tito always insisted his was a communism with a human face. In the end, his regime was no different from the other Communist autocracies of Eastern Europe. By failing to allow a non-ethnic political culture to mature, Tito insured that the fall of his regime turned into the collapse of the entire state structure. In the ruins, his heirs turned to the most atavistic methods of political mobilization in order to survive.

Ethnic difference itself was not responsible for the nationalist politics that emerged in the 1980s. Consciousness of ethnic difference, as Glenny argues, only turned into nationalist chauvinism when a discredited Communist elite began manipulating nationalist emotions in order to cling to power.

This is worth insisting upon since most outsiders assume that all Balkan peoples are incorrigibly nationalistic. In fact many of them lament the passing of Yugoslavia, precisely because it was a state which allowed them non-nationalistic ways of defining themselves. In a poignant and bitter essay, "Overcome by Nationhood," which she includes in her fine collection *The Balkan Express*, Slavenka Drakulic describes what it was like, as an independent Croatian journalist in the late 1980s, to be engulfed by the rising clamor of nationalist rhetoric. Having always defined herself by her education, profession, gender, and personality, she found herself, in the maddened atmosphere of 1991, stripped of all defining marks of identity other than simply being a Croatian. All that mattered in Zagreb was whether one was supporting the nation. What is true of a courageous and independent Croatian intellectual cannot be less true of ordinary villagers. The language of nationalist pride and nationalist grievance only appeared to give voice to their fears and longings. In reality, it ended up imprisoning everyone in the fiction of "pure" ethnic identity.

As Misha Glenny shows, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic was the first Yugoslav politician to break the Titoist taboo on popular mobilization of ethnic consciousness. With the unscrupulousness of a true demagogue, Milosevic portrayed himself both as the defender of Yugoslavia against the secessionist ambitions of the Croats and Slovenes and as the avenger of the wrongs done to Serbia by that very Yugoslavia.

For Branka Magas, the entire Yugoslav tragedy can be traced back to Milosevic's program, first set out in the 1986 Serbian Academy of Arts and Science Memorandum, to build a greater Serbia on the ruins of Tito's Yugoslavia. If the other republics would not agree to a new Yugoslavia dominated by the Serbs, Milosevic was prepared to incite the Serbian minorities in Kosovo, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina to rise up and demand Serbian protection. These minorities served as Milosevic's Sudeten Germans, the pretext and justification for his expansionary designs.

It is easy in retrospect to demonize the Serbs and to make it appear as if Milosevic was merely responding to the ethnic paranoia of both his domestic constituency and the Serbia diaspora. The reality is much more complicated. While there were Serbian nationalist extremists, like the Chetniks, still seething with resentment at Tito's campaign against Mihailovic during the Second World War, most urban Serbs in the early 1980s displayed little chauvinist paranoia and even less interest in their distant rural brethren in Knin, Pale, Kosovo, or Western Slavonia.

What needs to be explained, therefore, is why many ordinary Serbs' general indifference to the Serbian question turned into phobic anxiety that the Serbian diaspora was about to be annihilated by genocidal Croatians and fundamentalist Muslims. Magas argues as if Milosevic invented Serbian nationalism to serve his demagogic ends, but Serbian nationalism was not of Milosevic's making. It arose inevitably from the collapse of Tito's Yugoslavia. Once the multiethnic state disintegrated, every nationality outside a republic's borders found itself a national minority. As the largest such group, the Serbs felt particularly vulnerable.

Magas also argues as if the Croatian drive for independence was a protective response to Milosevic's expansionism. Misha Glenny's account rightly views Croatian nationalism as an independent force that bears some responsibility for the descent into tragedy. While both Croatia and Slovenia professed a willingness to live within a loosely federal Yugoslavia, in reality, by the late 1980s, the leaders of both republics were determined on independence. Croatians had a right to an independent state, but as Glenny points out, an independent Croatia aroused genuine fear in the 600,000-strong Serbian minority within its borders.

When Croatia set out on the path to independence in 1990, its new constitution described it as the state of the Croatian nation, with non-Croatians defined as protected minorities. While many Croats sincerely believed they were complying with European norms for the protection of minority rights, Serbs did not regard themselves as a minority but as a nation equal to the Croats. When the Croats revived the Sahovnica, the red and white checkered shield, as their new flag, Serbs took one look and believed the Ustashe had returned. The Sahovnica was both an innocently traditional Croat emblem and also the flag of the wartime regime which had exterminated a very large, if still undetermined, number of Serbs. When Serbs were dismissed from the Croatian police and judiciary in the summer of 1990, the Serbian minority concluded that they were witnessing the return of an ethnic state with a genocidal path.

Defenders of the Croatian position insist that these fears were exaggerated or manipulated by Milosevic. No doubt they were, but in the broader context of the collapse of the multiethnic Yugoslav state, Serbs had good reason to be afraid. (Glenny himself reported in these pages on the massacre of Serbs by right-wing Croats in the town of Gospic in the autumn of 1991).[2] This is the substance of Glenny's case, and while it has made his book unpopular in Zagreb, it is not anti-Croatian. It merely insists on showing, against the background of the general collapse of authority in the region, how each side's paranoia fed upon the other's.

As the BBC's Central European correspondent between 1989 and 1991, Glenny was uniquely placed to observe the disintegration of authority within Croatia's borders. He describes how in town after town the Serbian-Croatian war began with battles for control over the main seat of local power, the police station. In Serb villages like Borovo Selo, near Vukovar in Western Slavonia, the Croatian state dismissed local Serb policemen only to see them resurface as paramilitary vigilantes. When the Croats tried to restore control over Serbian areas, these paramilitary forces resisted and set up roadblocks at the entrance to their villages. With the Croats losing control of the Serbian areas of their state, the Yugoslav national army intervened, at first to restore order and then to smash the Croatian state altogether. Croatia then had no choice but to defend its national existence. It now finds a third of its national territory occupied by the rump state of Serbian Krajina and its supply routes to the Dalmatian coast blockaded by Serbian paramilitaries in Knin. The world's fitful attention is now turned on Bosnia. But the situation in Croatia is untenable and could explode into war at any time.

Glenny completed his book in June 1992, when the Bosnian war was still in its infancy. Yet in the chapter he devotes to Bosnia, he argues convincingly that it is not a separate drama, but a continuation of the primary struggle between Serb and Croat nationalist elites to establish ethnic states in the region. While Serbs have been rightly outlawed by the international community for their attempt to destroy the Bosnian state, the Croats have also been feeding on Bosnia's prostrate corpse. Croatia maintains both paramilitary and regular army units in Bosnia-Herzegovina and even otherwise liberal Croatians insist on their right to dismember the Bosnia-Herzegovina state, in order to guarantee the security of Dalmatia and south-central Croatia. As Misha Glenny recalls, Tudjman actually proposed to Milosevic in 1992 that they divide Bosnia between them. If Tudjman is now assisting Izetbegovic and the Muslims it is not in order to defend Bosnia's territorial integrity but merely to repel their common enemy.

From this it follows that the West may have made a mistake in singling out the Serbs for sanctions. At the least, Croatia should have been condemned, not for defending itself against invasion, but for its subsequent role in the dismembering of Bosnia.

When I talked with Milovan Djilas in Belgrade recently, he argued that the "satanization" of Serbia by the West had not undermined Milosevic or prevented him from aiding the Bosnian Serbs. Instead of blaming his regime for the long gas queues and the inflation, running at 200 percent per month, most Serbs in the streets blame the West. Even if economic chaos were to cause Milosevic to fall, his place might merely be taken by an even more odiously nationalistic demagogue.

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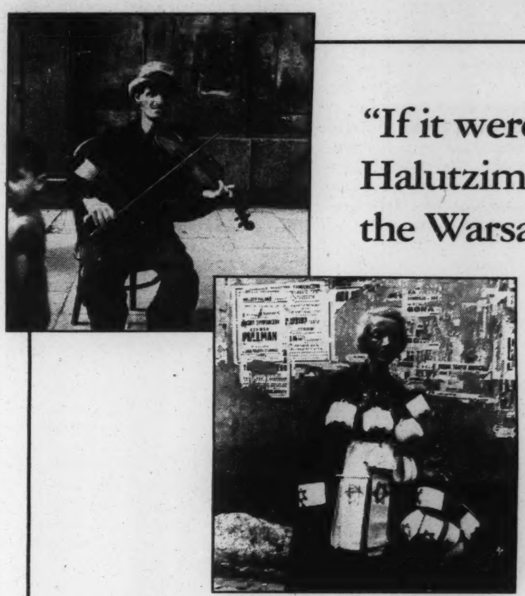
[2] See *The New York Review*, January 30, 1992.

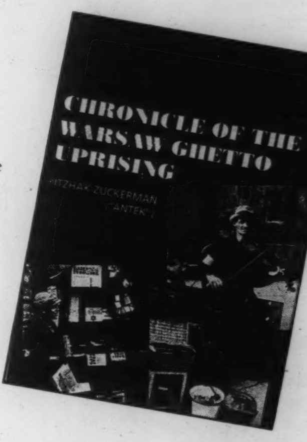
Sanctions may be the minimum moral response to Serbian war crimes, but the West cannot suppose that they will be effective in stopping the war. Indeed the so-called "international community" has precious few cards left to play in the Balkans. It will not invade and protect citizens because no political leaders will take the risk. It cannot cut and run since its entire credibility is at stake. It cannot even impose a peace. At best it can only supervise a cease-fire once the disputants are sufficiently exhausted. Even then, peace keepers will have to stand on guard at the checkpoints, not for years but for decades.

The West's central dilemma is what position it should take toward the emerging order of ethnically cleansed micro-states which have taken the place of Yugoslavia. Ethnic apartheid may be an abomination, but for the more than a million refugees who have fled or been driven from their homes, apartheid is the only guarantee of safety they are prepared to trust. The Vance-Owen plan is much condemned in Washington for appearing to reward the results of Serbian ethnic cleansing. But the innocent civilian victims in the area are indifferent to such scruples. For the West has failed to protect Sarajevo, where Muslim, Croats, and Serbs lived together in peace for centuries. The traumatized victims of this conflict are hardly likely to trickle back to the multiethnic communities they have left behind simply in order to vindicate our liberal principles.

Standing back from the catastrophe, one begins to see, with the help of Misha Glenny's fine book, that Western failures of policy were caused by something deeper than inattention, misinformation, or misguided good intentions. The very principles behind our policies were in contradiction. In the light-headed euphoria of 1989 our political leaders announced their support for the principle of national self-determination and for maintaining the territorial integrity of existing states, without realizing that the first principle contradicted the second. We insisted on the inviolability of frontiers, without making clear whether we also meant the frontiers between the republics within federal states like Yugoslavia. Most of all, we allowed guilt over our imperial past to lead us to evade our responsibilities for defining the terms of the postimperial peace. The Western Europeans and the US could have ended the cold war with a comprehensive territorial settlement in Eastern Europe, defining new borders, establishing guarantees of minority rights, and adjudicating between rival claims to self-determination. After Versailles, after Yalta, the collapse of the final empire in Europe gave us a third opportunity to define a durable peace for the whole continent. Yet so concerned were we to avoid playing the imperial policeman, so self-absorbed were we in the frantic late Eighties boom, that we let every local post-Communist demagogue exploit the rhetoric of self-determination and national rights to their own nefarious ends. The terrible new order of ethnically cleansed states in the former Yugoslavia is the monument to our follies as much as it is to theirs. ☐



"If it weren't for Yitzhak, we Halutzim would not have had the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising! Only one step—and we would have been swallowed up in the darkness of the Holocaust without a trace."—Zivia Lubetkin



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Jefferson at Home

Jeffersonian Legacies
edited by Peter S. Onuf.
University Press of Virginia,
478 pp., $39.50; $18.95 (paper)

Gordon S. Wood

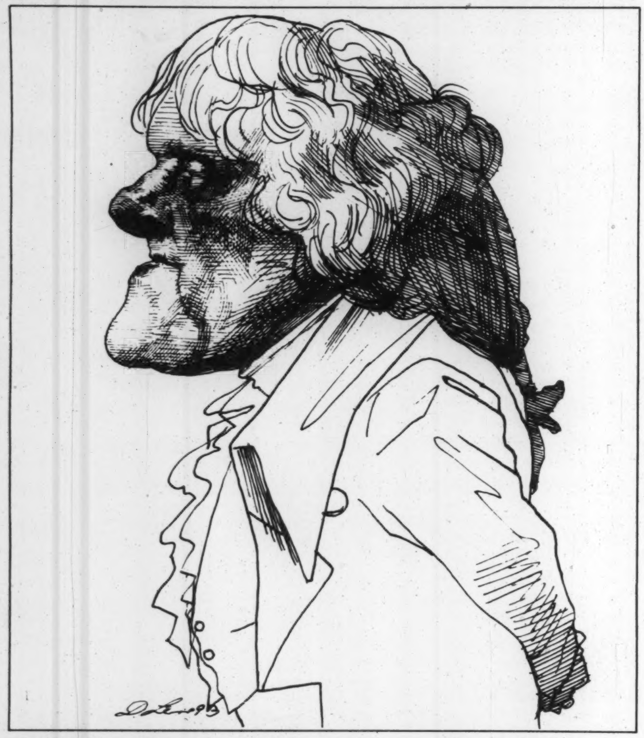
President William Jefferson Clinton began his administration by invoking the memory of Thomas Jefferson. Not only did he launch his inaugural week at Jefferson's home, Monticello, but he followed Jefferson's route to the White House and cited him in his inaugural address. It is not surprising that Clinton should have tried to use Jefferson as a symbol of his desire for change. Jefferson was after all the presumed founder of the Democratic Party and has long been seen as a champion of liberal causes. But Jefferson does not belong just to the Democratic Party. Republican Governor William Weld of Massachusetts calls himself a Jeffersonian. And President Reagan repeatedly called upon Jefferson in order to justify his attempts to reduce the size of the federal government; indeed, he urged us all to "pluck a flower from Thomas Jefferson's life and wear it in our soul forever."

And so it has gone almost from the beginning of our history. More than any other of our so-called "founding fathers" Jefferson has become a symbol, a touchstone, a measure of what we Americans are or where we are going. "Jeffersonian" is a word of general appeal. We are continually asking ourselves whether Jefferson still survives, or what is still living in the thought of Jefferson; and we quote him on every side of every major issue in our history. No figure in our history has embodied so much of our heritage and so many of our hopes. Most Americans think of Jefferson much as our first professional biographer James Parton did. "If Jefferson was wrong," wrote Parton in 1874, "America is wrong. If America is right, Jefferson was right."

As Merrill Peterson has shown us in his superb book published over thirty years ago, the image of Jefferson in American culture has always been "a sensitive reflector...of America's troubled search for the image of itself."[1] And the symbolizing, the image-mongering, the identifying of Jefferson with America, has not changed a bit in the generation since Peterson's book was published—even though the level of professional historical scholarship has never been higher. If anything, during these turbulent times the identification of Jefferson with America has become even greater—until at this moment in 1993 of the 250th anniversary of Jefferson's birth all our present anguish and turmoil seem to be embodied in the life of this single man.

Anniversaries of great men and great events are times for commemoration if not for celebration, and they are also times for historical reassessment. But they can be tricky affairs, as we found out last year during the commemoration of the quincentenary of Columbus's discovery of America. It is not likely that Jefferson will become as politically incorrect this year as Columbus did last year, but he is getting there—as suggested by the book under review and the conference that spawned it, the first major historical and scholarly reassessment of this 250th anniversary. There is a likelihood that any present-day historical reassessment will prove Jefferson wrong at least on some issues. And, as Parton said, "if Jefferson was wrong, then America is wrong."

This important scholarly reevaluation of Jefferson took place at a conference held in October 1992 at the institution he founded, the University of Virginia. The conference resulted six months later in the collection of fifteen essays entitled *Jeffersonian Legacies,* published to coincide with the 250th anniversary of Jefferson's birthday on April 13, 1993. Probably never before has a scholarly press moved so quickly from a set of conference papers to a finished book. It is a measure of how important Jefferson is to the University of Virginia and its press and perhaps to the rest of us as well.[2]



The six-day conference, as Daniel P. Jordan, director of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation, declares in a foreword to the book, was designed to be "revisionist in spirit" and "innovative in format." It brought together a wide variety of participants—academics from several disciplines and countries but also policy makers and members of the general public. Conspicuously absent, however, were the leading scholars with already established reputations as Jefferson experts, scholars such as Noel Cunningham, Jack McLaughlin, and Garrett Ward Sheldon, who were presumed to have already had their say. Even the role of the country's preeminent Jefferson scholar, Merrill Peterson, was confined to a few brief remarks at the end of the conference. In order to promote fresh thinking about Jefferson and his legacy, the organizers of the conference sought to invite mostly people who were not considered part of the so-called "Jefferson establishment."[3] Even the present Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Professor of History at the University of Virginia and the chief organizer of the conference and editor of the volume, Peter S. Onuf, is different from the two preceding holders of the Jefferson chair, Dumas Malone and Merrill Peterson, in that he has not previously written anything directly about Jefferson.

The conference sought to explore critically Jefferson's ideas and actions in relation to certain central issues of rights, education, democracy, and race and slavery. It aimed to measure Jefferson's life and values against the principal concerns of the present, an aim underlined in a major evening address given by the civil rights activist Julian Bond. Most of the commissioned papers, which make up the published volume, were available in advance but were not presented publicly.[4] Instead, most of the conference was devoted to a series of discussions by panels composed not simply of scholars but also of businessmen, lawyers, civil rights activists, journalists, public officials, and museum professionals, together with a good deal of lively audience participation. "The result," as Jordan says, "was an intellectual free-for-all, with polemical discourse, reasoned debates, brilliant insights, wild digressions, and even some egregious misinformation."

On no issue were the discussions more free-wheeling, more polemical, more wild, and sometimes more misinformed than on the issue of race and slavery. There is no doubt that the conference and the fifteen essays that make up the subsequent volume present many new and fresh insights on various aspects of Jefferson's life and works, from his views on religion to his attitudes toward foreign policy. But the issue that most provoked and dominated the conference and the one that permeates the subsequent volume and gives it its pungency is the issue of race and slavery.

Fifty years ago in 1943 at the 200th anniversary of his birth Jefferson was seen as the solution to all of America's problems. This year at the 250th anniversary of his birth he has actually become a part of America's problems. It is not that America has lost faith in democracy or equality or in individual rights. Far from it: Jefferson's reputation as the author of the Declaration of Independence and its promotion of rights and equality remains supreme. So too does his position as the leading spokesman in our past for the importance of education, for the separation of church and state, and for the right of the people to rule. But it is Jefferson's position on race and slavery that makes him a problem. In our present climate the fact that Jefferson was a racist slaveholder seems to defile and discredit all of his great liberal and democratic achievements.

Paul Finkelman, visiting associate professor of history at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, brought a prosecutor's zeal to the conference, and his comments and paper on Jefferson and slavery pleased some, angered others, and bemused many. It was not that Finkelman said anything new in his paper or in his comments; it was rather the relentless earnestness of his attack on Jefferson—to the point where some scholars present wondered what he was hoping to accomplish. Yet there was no doubt that Finkelman's attack on Jefferson struck a responsive chord among some journalists and some members of the general public.

Surely there is no greater irony in American history than the fact that America's supreme spokesman for liberty and equality was a lifelong aristocratic owner of slaves. Jefferson hated slavery, it is true, but, unlike Washington and some of his fellow Virginians, during his lifetime he freed only eight of his nearly two hundred slaves. "In the fifty years from 1776 until his death in 1826, a period of extraordinary public service, he did little," says Finkelman, "to end slavery or to dissociate himself from his role as the master of Monticello." On the contrary: he bought, bred, and flogged his slaves and hunted down fugitives in much the same way his fellow Virginia planters did—all the while declaring that American slavery was not as bad as that of the ancient Romans. Even when some of his younger countrymen like Edward Coles sought his blessing in liberating their slaves, he refused to encourage them and offered only excuses for delay.

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[1] Merrill Peterson, *The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* (Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. vii, 9.

[2] Two hour-long videotapes of the conference have been produced by Central Virginia Public Television and will be shown on PBS sometime this year.

[3] I was one of those invited to speak at the conference, and I contributed an essay to the published volume.

[4] Included in the volume, in addition to those essays mentioned in this piece and one by myself, are papers by Joyce Appleby, Paul K. Conkin, Douglas L. Wilson, Rhys Isaac, Jan Lewis, Jack P. Greene, Stephen A. Conrad, Herbert Sloan, Michael Lienesch, John Lauritz Larson, and Walter LaFeber.

Most embarrassing in today's climate are Jefferson's views of blacks. Jefferson could never really imagine freed blacks living in a white man's America, and throughout his life he insisted that any emancipation of the slaves had to be accompanied by their expulsion from the country. He wanted all blacks sent to the West Indies, or Africa, or anywhere out of the United States. He feared that former slaves would take revenge on their former masters for the "ten thousand... injuries they have sustained." In 1797 he told a fellow Virginian and slaveholder that "if something is not done and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children." "But," says Finkelman, "he had no idea what that 'something' might be. A man who fearlessly pledged his life to fight the king of England and his mighty armies trembled at the idea of black slaves acting as free men."

Jefferson's remedy of expulsion was based on racial fear and antipathy. While he had no apprehensions about mingling white blood with that of the Indian, he never ceased expressing his "great aversion" to miscegenation between blacks and whites. When the Roman slave was freed, he "might mix with, without staining the blood of, his master." When the black slave was freed, however, he had, said Jefferson, "to be removed beyond the reach of mixture." Although Jefferson believed that the Indians were uncivilized, he always admired them and made all sorts of environmental explanations for their differences from whites. Yet he was never able to do the same for the African American. Instead, he continually suspected that the black man was inherently inferior to the white in both body and mind.

The only controversial issue that Finkelman avoided was that of Jefferson's supposed relationship with his mulatto household slave Sally Hemings. Finkelman said he was agnostic on the Hemings affair and so spent little or no time on it, but many others at the conference wanted to talk about little else. The charge that Jefferson maintained Hemings as his mistress for decades and fathered several children by her was first made by an unscrupulous newspaperman, James Callender, in 1802. Since then, historians and others have periodically resurrected the accusation. In fact, in the most recent study of Jefferson's political thought scholar Garrett Ward Sheldon treats Jefferson's "keeping of a black mistress" as an established fact, a "common transgression of his class."[5]

In one of the most fascinating essays in *Jeffersonian Legacies* Scot A. French and Edward L. Ayers surveyed the ways in which scholars and others have dealt with Jefferson and the issue of race and slavery over the past fifty years, and actually carried their survey right up through the conference in which they were participants. Central to their discussion is the question of Sally Hemings, which one panelist at the conference called "one of the most talked about/not talked about issues in American history." Having access to the papers of Dumas Malone, Jefferson's great biographer during the past half century, allowed French and Ayers to describe with great detail the anguish and anger felt by the so-called "Jefferson establishment" over the revival in the 1960s of the old accusation that Hemings was Jefferson's mistress.

Particularly irritating to Malone, Julian Boyd, and others was Fawn Brodie's 1974 psychobiography of Jefferson, which ingeniously argued that Jefferson had a passionate love affair with his mulatto slave. Far from being a critic of Jefferson, Brodie saw herself as saving him from accusations of racism. If Jefferson truly loved this mulatto slave, he could not have had as much antipathy to African Americans as others had suggested. Unfortunately, however, Brodie built up her case for the love affair largely through contrived readings of evidence and even the absence of evidence. She made much of the fact, for example, that Jefferson in his journal of his travels in southern France in 1787 used the word "mulatto" only twice in describing the soil. Then the fourteen- or fifteen-year-old Sally joined the Jefferson household in Paris, and the result, said Brodie, was that the love-stricken Jefferson in his journal for a trip through northern Europe in 1788 mentions the word "mulatto" eight times! Did Jefferson write to his supposed mistress during his trips? No letters have been found, but Brodie found it significant that the letter-index volume for the year 1788 had disappeared, the only volume missing in the whole forty-three-year record.[6]

Malone and others believed that the Hemings liaison was implausible to those who know Jefferson's character intimately. Jefferson was after all a man who did not indulge his passions but continually suppressed them. But there are obviously many Americans who accept completely as truth Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemings. During the panel discussion on "Jefferson, Race, and Slavery" some panelists and members of the audience declared that everyone they knew believed in the affair. While white scholars weighed evidence and argued about the plausibility of the affair, blacks at the conference, particularly the heirs from the Hemings family who were present, declared that long-existing African American oral traditions confirmed the truth of the relationship. Some suggested that there was also a white oral tradition about the Hemings connection that only the protective scholarship of the experts had stifled. Former interpreters and guides at Monticello revealed that in the past many of the white and black visitors to Jefferson's home had wanted to talk about the Hemings affair and about miscegenation but had felt inhibited to ask questions.

Recently, however, the protective atmosphere at Monticello of denying even the existence of Callender's accusation has changed. In the late 1980s the Monticello administration for the first time directly confronted the Hemings story in its visitors guide, stating that the liaison was impossible to prove either way but that most Jefferson scholars discounted its

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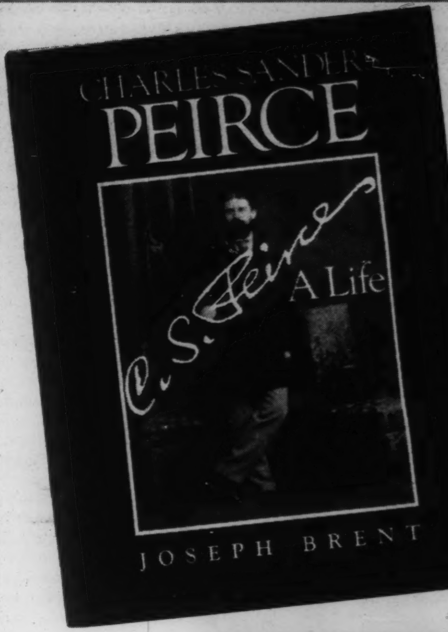
[5] Garrett Ward Sheldon, *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 126.

[6] Fawn M. Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (Norton, 1974), pp. 229–230, 233–234.



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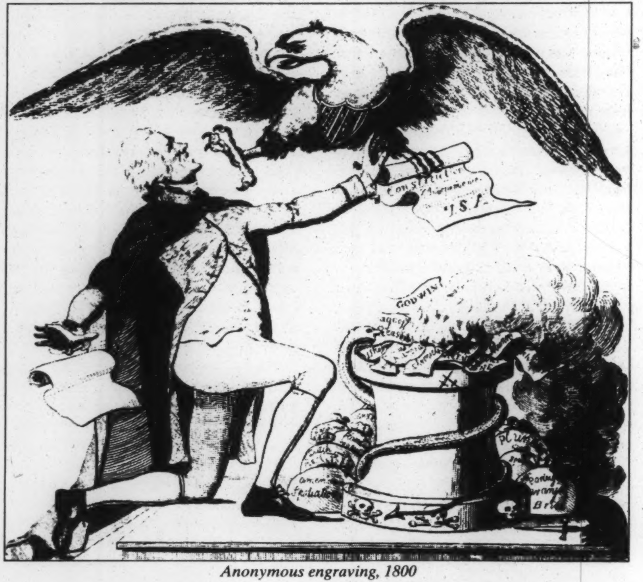
truth. Yet what was seen by the newly professionalized staff at Monticello as a balanced statement of scholarly opinion was dismissed by many people, including Jesse Jackson during a visit to Jefferson's home, as "an attempt to pour sand over history."

Once the issue of miscegenation was out on the table at the conference panelists and members of the audience stumbled over themselves in their eagerness to discuss it and acknowledge its reality in American life. One of the panelists at the conference, Bernadine Simmons, a vivacious and outspoken black TV journalist from Richmond, electrified the audience by claiming that all the African Americans in the room were "mongrels." Miscegenation, she said, was not something that Americans want to talk about. But look at us, she said. "We did not get to be that way because God said it would be that way.... It got to be that way because people were miscegenating at all hours of the day and night." Armstead Robinson, director of the Carter B. Woodson Institute for Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Virginia, chimed in with a claim made by a geneticist friend that between 10 and 20 percent of the so-called whites in the southern states had some mixture of black blood. Others pointed out the way in which the offspring of miscegenation, like the light-skinned Hemings family, were given privileged positions in the big houses of the slaveholding planters and the manner in which these privileges have been carried into our own time in the class distinctions maintained among blacks.

Suddenly the truth or falsity of the Hemings affair became irrelevant compared to the undoubted fact that overwhelming numbers of white slaveholders had participated in miscegenation and that, acknowledged or not, many Americans today were living with various degrees of racial mixture. No scholar, even among those who find the Jefferson-Hemings liaison implausible, denies that Jefferson presided over a household in which miscegenation was taking place. Regardless of whether he himself was directly involved, he knew that white relatives or white members of his household or his Monticello staff were having sexual relations with his slaves. As director of research at Monticello Lucia C. Stanton says, Jefferson "who often stated his 'aversion' to racial mixture, lived surrounded by its examples."

French and Ayres in their essay in *Jeffersonian Legacies* complain that no one in the conference "stood up to defend Jefferson." Consequently, they say, "many of the discussions—especially the one on race and slavery—seemed unfocused and adrift. Instead of generating lively debate, Jefferson's record on race produced little more than the sounds of muffled agreement." It's a strange complaint, especially since the discussion on race and slavery was the most lively and revealing of all of the panel discussions. Given the present-minded nature of the discussions at the conference, it is hard to see how those in attendance could have defended Jefferson's record on race; they would have had to argue for the mental and physical inferiority of blacks and for racial segregation.

All that can be said about Jefferson on the issue of slavery and race is that he was very much a man of his own time, very much a man of the eighteenth century. It should always be remembered, however, that by the time of the American Revolution slavery had existed in Virginia and the rest of America for over a century without substantial criticism or moral censure. Therefore by condemning slavery and by putting the institution morally on the defensive Jefferson and some of his fellow revolutionaries did defy the slaveholding society in which they had been born and raised; that was no mean accomplishment. In his sometimes muted opposition to slavery Jefferson may not have represented the best in his society, but he was certainly better than most; indeed his words in the Declaration of Independence eventually became the most important ideological force undermining the institution of slavery. In his views on race, however, he was like almost everyone of his white countrymen.



Anonymous engraving, 1800

What the conference's discussion on Jefferson's views and actions on race and slavery clearly brought out was the conventionality of the man on these subjects. Indeed, even his beliefs that all men were created equal and possessed rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were little more than conventional liberal and enlightened principles of the eighteenth century, although, as historian William W. Freehling has pointed out, Jefferson did have "an extraordinary gift of lending grace to conventionalities."[7] Jefferson had to be conventional in much of his thinking or he could never have had the impact he had on his contemporaries. His writing of the Declaration of Independence, he correctly recalled in 1825, was "not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of...; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent, and to justify ourselves in the independent stand we are compelled to take."

Some of Jefferson's conventional thinking has lived on and some has not. On many modern issues, including those of civil rights, as Julian Bond's lecture at the conference made clear, Jefferson's ideas and words on rights and equality have transcended his particular time and place; even Martin Luther King, Jr., could build his dream on Jefferson's words. But on the issues of race and slavery Jefferson's ideas and words have not transcended his time and place and could not; and, remarkably, he himself sensed that. As he wrote to the poet Lydia Howard Sigourney in 1824, "Those who come after us will be wiser than we are, for light is spreading and man improving." On that future wisdom and on the "dispensations of an all-wise and all-powerful providence" he rested his hopes for America's eventually doing "what is right."

Jefferson was a large slaveholding eighteenth-century planter, and, as Lucia C. Stanton's carefully researched essay on Jefferson and his slaves at Monticello shows, that alone implicated him in the injustice of the system in ways he could scarcely have comprehended. Stanton has none of the prosecutorial zeal of Finkelman, but for that very reason her coolly professional account of Jefferson's relations with his own slaves is far more damaging to Jefferson than Finkelman's searing indictment.

In many respects Monticello was an ideal plantation of the old South, a self-contained patriarchal enclave set apart from the hustle and bustle of the outside world. Like many other southern planters, Jefferson regarded his slaves as members of his "family," whom he as patriarch had responsibility to protect and care for. But like all such plantations of the old South, the ideal had to be a hollow shell, no matter how kind or gentle the master.

Upon the division of his father-in-law's estate in 1774 Jefferson became the second largest slaveholder in Albemarle County; thereafter the number of his slaves fluctuated around two hundred—with increases through births offset by periodic sales to pay off debts. Jefferson was known to be a good master, reluctant to break up families or to sell slaves except for delinquency or at their own request. Nevertheless, as Stanton points out, between

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[7] William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists at Bay, 1776–1854*, Vol. I (Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 123.

1784 and 1794 he disposed of 161 people by sale or gift. It is true that Jefferson was averse to separating young children from their parents; but, as Stanton writes, "once black boys or girls reached the age of ten or twelve and their working lives began, they lost their status as children and with it, the guarantee of family stability."

Monticello was a working plantation and Jefferson was eager to make it pay. His slaves may have been members of his "family" but they were units of production as well. Everywhere on his plantation he sought to eliminate pockets of idleness. "Neither youth, age, illness, nor weather were allowed to stop the plantation machine," writes Stanton. If a slave was too old or too sick to work in the fields, he or she was put to tending the vegetable gardens or to cooking in the quarters. When one of his former head men named Nace became ill, Jefferson ordered that he be "entirely kept from labour until he recovers"; nevertheless, Nace was to spend his days indoors shelling corn or making shoes or baskets. Jefferson was willing to prescribe lighter work for women who were pregnant or raising infant children because they were actually breeding more property; thus, he said, "a child raised every 2. years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man." This was one of the times, he said, when "providence has made our interest and our duties coincide perfectly."

"I love industry and abhor severity," said Jefferson in 1805, and he himself apparently never physically punished a slave. But he certainly ordered disobedient slaves whipped; and those he could not correct he sold, often as a lesson to the other slaves. Jefferson ordered one particularly unmanageable slave to be sold so far away that it would seem to his companions "as if he were put out of the way by death."

To protect himself from the realities of owning human beings, says Stanton, Jefferson "needed the same psychological buffers as other well-intentioned slaveholders." Sensitive as he was, he had to numb himself to what was going on at Monticello, close his mind in a way that distanced and dehumanized the black families among whom he lived for his entire life. In the infrequent descriptions of his slaves in his correspondence, Jefferson, writes Stanton, singles them out "for characteristics—trustworthiness or unreliability, intelligence or stupidity, sobriety or drunkenness—that bear entirely on performance." To Jefferson the slaves could not be real human beings, never mind persons who might be equal to him and other whites. For Jefferson, as for most of the southern planters, the bulk of the slaves were and had to be merely names in an account book, and, as Stanton adds, "only first names, and diminutives at that." Only by regarding his slaves as inferior beings could he justify what he was doing at Monticello. As he reportedly told a visiting Englishman in 1807, the "Negro race were... made to carry burthens."

Ultimately patriarchal benevolence was irrelevant to what was increasingly seen by the late eighteenth century to be the inhumanity of slaveholding. All the kindness in the world could not hide the horrors of black slavery, one hour of which, said Jefferson in 1786, was "fraught with more misery" than ages of the tyranny that the American revolutionaries had just thrown off. Yet Jefferson eventually learned to deaden whatever stings of conscience holding other humans in bondage caused him. As Stanton says, "He appears to have convinced himself that those who were, as he suspected in print in the *Notes on Virginia*, 'inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination,' and whose griefs were 'transient,' might find happiness in a bondage mitigated by a benevolent hand." He said he could not free most of his slaves because it would be "like abandoning children": they could not survive outside of his kindly rule. In the end, however, he died so deeply in debt that his "family" that he had nurtured and controlled for sixty years had to be sold and dispersed throughout the land. He abandoned his "children" after all.

Jefferson's career as plantation slaveholder was the career of many other southern slaveholders, and no degree of deification of the man can change that fact. Thus we should stop the deification, stop searching for legacies that supposedly pass directly from this eighteenth-century man to our present. No doubt Jefferson made many ringing statements on behalf of liberty and equality and freedom of speech and freedom of conscience that have resounded throughout our culture, and indeed the world's culture, during the past two hundred years; and we quite sensibly renew our belief in these values by periodically reinvoking and rereading Jefferson's statements. Yet we ought always to remember that Jefferson's eighteenth-century statements have been glossed, refracted, expanded, and developed by two centuries of subsequent historical experience that is just as important in sustaining our values as the original statements themselves. The legacies we have received from the past are not and could not be the products of a single man of the eighteenth century, or for that matter all the "founding fathers" put together; instead, our legacies are the products of our entire accumulated historical experience.

We Americans make a great mistake in idolizing our so-called "founding fathers"; we seriously err in canonizing, and making symbols of, authentic historical figures who cannot and should not be ripped out of their own time and place. By turning Jefferson into the kind of transcendent moral hero that no authentic historically situated human being could ever be, we leave ourselves demoralized by the time-bound weaknesses of this eighteenth-century slaveholder. If we continue to make Jefferson stand for America and represent the country's moral character, we will end up stressing our deficiencies and ignoring just how far we have progressed since the eighteenth century. Heroes and founding fathers are wonderful things for a culture to have, but they must be mythical characters like Romulus and Remus or King Arthur, obscured in the mists of the distant past; they cannot be, like Jefferson and the other "founding fathers," real human beings about whom an extraordinary amount of historical detail is known. ☐

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Letters On Dark Times

Gordon A. Craig

Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers:
Correspondence, 1926–1969
edited by Lotte Kohler and
Hans Saner, translated by
Robert and Rita Kimber.
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,
821 pp., $49.95

In the introduction to his edition of the letters of Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno wrote that

> in the age of the disintegration of experience human beings are no longer subjectively disposed to letter writing. For the present it looks as though technology is eliminating the preconditions for the letter. Because letters are no longer necessary, given the speedier possibilities of communication and the shrinking of spatiotemporal distances, their inherent substance is disintegrating as well.[1]

The correspondence of Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers stands as a notable contradiction to that confident generalization, which would probably have amused and pleased the two correspondents, who disliked Adorno because of what they believed were his attempts to ingratiate himself with the Nazis. His "hodgepodges of anything and everything that comes to mind are intolerable," Jaspers wrote Hannah Arendt.

Their letters to each other were the product of the dissolution of their normal world, and their substance was enriched, rather than impoverished, by that experience. When the correspondence became regular and frequent in 1945 (there are only thirty letters out of the 433 printed here from the years before then), Hannah Arendt was in New York leading what she called the "infinitely complex red-tape existence of stateless persons," while Jaspers was in Heidelberg, isolated in a society of "hostile faces" and "sullen losers" who slandered him behind his back. They were like survivors of the Flood, Noahs, as Arendt said in a figure of speech which delighted Jaspers and which he often used, "floating about on the seas of the world," who could only find hope and solidarity by "trying to steer their arks as close to one another as they can."

Their letters, at first a means of renewing their common scholarly interests, rapidly developed into a forum for discussion of fundamental issues in their lives and writing—what it meant, for example, to be a German or a Jew after Auschwitz—and of the moral and political climate of the three countries that meant most to them, West Germany, Israel, and the United States. The two correspondents debated all of the major issues of the first phase of the cold war, Arendt always the more passionate partner and the more pessimistic, Jaspers less prone to catastrophic views and more hopeful of mankind's potential for good. Over

Hannah Arendt at eighteen

the years, the teacher-student relationship of the first years became an exchange between equals who respected each other's views and were bound by an ever deepening friendship. Because neither of them believed that the letters would ever be published and because they trusted each other, there was no trace of self-censorship in what they wrote. As Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner point out in their elegant and informative introduction to this volume, Arendt and Jaspers

> reveal themselves in a more personal, spontaneous, warmer, and, at the same time, more ruthless way than they do in their works. For Arendt, this correspondence is the first published document from her private life. For Jaspers, it is certainly an unusual one: the "North German block of ice," as he once called himself, displays tones of irony, tenderness, and human warmth, which some readers find lacking in his autobiographical writings.

1.

Hannah Arendt met Karl Jaspers for the first time in 1926, when she came to Heidelberg as a student. She had already spent a year at the University of Marburg, where she had attended the lectures and seminars of the handsome, exciting, thirty-five-year-old philosopher Martin Heidegger, who was putting the final touches to his masterwork *Being and Time*, and where she had also had a passionate love affair with him. Deciding that it would be unwise to attempt to write her doctoral dissertation under his supervision, she had moved to Freiburg for a semester with Heidegger's teacher Edmund Husserl, who had then recommended that she go to Jaspers in Heidelberg. It proved to be good advice. From the beginning she and Jaspers got on well together; she told him later that he was "quite simply the greatest educator of all time"; and for the rest of her life she remembered his study as "the bright place," where they had worked together.

At the time of her arrival, Jaspers was beginning to draw together the notes and lectures for the draft of his three-volume *Philosophy*, which appeared in 1931 and made his reputation. Arendt's biographer has written,

> The goddess she often invoked, Fortune, was twice kind to her: she not only studied with the two greatest German philosophers of the generation which reached philosophical maturity between the two world wars; she was able to participate with both in the classes and discussions that shaped their finest works.[2]

Jaspers, moreover, probably strengthened her political sense, for, to a degree that was never true of Heidegger, he was profoundly interested in politics. He once wrote that philosophy has to be "concrete and practical, without forgetting its origins for a minute," and it was in this spirit that in 1930 he wrote *The Intellectual Situation of the Age*, a wide-ranging philosophical analysis of society in the last years of the Weimar republic, when "there [was] a widespread perception that everything [was] breaking down and there [was] nothing that [was] not questionable."[3]

Their discussions were, to be sure, far from political at the beginning, for Arendt had chosen to write her dissertation on "The Conception of Love in Saint Augustine: An Attempt at a Philosophical Interpretation." After she had left Heidelberg, however, and begun work on her biography of Rahel Varnhagen, which was to be her *Habilitationsschrift*,[4] they were soon engaged in lively political dialogue, Jaspers, unhappy about Arendt's emphasis upon the Jewish problem in Rahel's life and feeling that her philosophical argument was at times "thetic and dogmatic, or so it seems to me," and Arendt, in turn, expressing dissatisfaction that, in a new book on Max Weber,[5] Jaspers seemed to identify "the German essence" with a figure so closely identified with the search for German world power. Speaking as a Jew, she added, she could not comment on Weber's "imposing patriotism.... For me, Germany means my mother tongue, philosophy, and literature." Jaspers, whose wife was Jewish, answered,

> I find it odd that you as a Jew want to set yourself apart from what is German.... When you speak of mother tongue, philosophy, and literature, all you need add is historical-political destiny, and there is no difference left at all.

He then added what was an astonishingly prophetic comment, considering that it was made in the month that Hitler came to power:

> This destiny *today* is that Germany can exist only in a unified Europe, that her revival in her old glory can come about only through the unification of Europe, that the devil with whom we will inevitably have to make our pact is the egoistic, bourgeois anxiety of the French.

This brief exchange from the early

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[1] Reprinted in Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature, Volume Two*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Columbia University Press, 1992), p. 235.

[2] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (Yale University Press, 1982), p. 62.

[3] Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (5th edition, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1933), p. 14. This appeared as Volume 1000 in the well-known Sammlung Göschen in 1931. Fifty years later, it inspired Jürgen Habermas to edit, as Volume 1000 of Edition Suhrkamp, a two-volume collection of essays by various hands called *Stichworte zur "Geistigen Situation der Zeit"* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).

[4] This would have given her the right to teach at a German university. The coming of the Nazis prevented this. The book was published in English translation in 1958 and in Germany a year later. In 1966, Arendt's lawyer suggested that she appeal to the German federal court for restitution, and in July 1966 Jaspers wrote an affidavit which stated that the basic requirements for being habilitated had been met in her case. The appeal was at first turned down but was resubmitted. Restitution followed after Jaspers's death.

[5] Karl Jaspers, *Max Weber: Deutsches Wesen im politischen Denken, im Forschen und Philosophieren* (Oldenburg in Oldenburg, 1932).

1930s has all the contentious vigor and reflective depth of the later correspondence. But twelve long years separated them. After the Nazis came to power, Arendt went to Paris, where she worked for organizations that helped Jewish refugees emigrate to Palestine and supplied legal aid to antifascists, and she remained in France until 1940, when she and her second husband, Heinrich Blücher, secured American emergency visas and emigrated to the United States. Here she worked for Jewish Cultural Reconstruction Inc. and wrote articles for the German-language magazine *Aufbau,* and, at the end of the war, when she became an editor at Schocken Books, began her best-known work, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

During the same years, Jaspers was having increasing difficulties with the Nazi regime. At a time when university professors, led by Martin Heidegger, were rallying to the Nazi cause, he went into what was later called "the inner emigration." Knowledge of his attitude meant that both teaching and publishing became difficult; in 1936 his book on Nietzsche[6] was ignored by the newspaper press, and in 1943 he was forbidden to publish altogether. He and his wife lived out the war in loneliness and, because Gertrud Jaspers was Jewish, in apprehension. The condition had been relieved, but not entirely overcome, when, in December 1945, he received a letter and several CARE packages from his former student, and their correspondence resumed.

It did so, on Arendt's part, with a lively description of her adopted country—in which "there really is such a thing as freedom" and "people here feel themselves responsible for public life to an extent that I have never seen in any European country" but where there was a "fundamental anti-intellectualism, which, for certain special reasons, is at its worst in the universities," where "the fundamental contradiction... is the coexistence of political freedom and social oppression," and where "antipathy toward Jews is, so to speak, a consensus omnium." She added a declaration:

> First, thanks to my husband, I have learned to think politically and see historically;[7] and, second, I have refused to abandon the Jewish question as the focal point of my historical and political thinking.

All of this fell upon eager ears in Heidelberg, where Jaspers was starved for intellectual discourse.

It was only natural, given the state of the world—these were the years when the British efforts to deal with the future of Palestine failed and the United States recognized the independence of the state of Israel, and when the international military tribune at Nuremberg addressed itself to the crimes of the Nazi leadership—that their letters had much to say about the Jewish question and the problem of German guilt. Neither of them was enthusiastic about the creation of a new Jewish state. During the war, Arendt had championed the raising of a Jewish army to fight on the side of the Allies, and in the Middle East she favored a federal solution that would make possible a reconciliation between the Arabs and the Jewish settlers. Jaspers's opposition was more fundamental. In a letter of July 1947, he wrote:

> We ought at least to find the star that leads us on: something like an idea for a world order, but one that remains influenced by transcendence and does not lead to the flatness of an organization, a rational law for each and every case, to the a-historicity of a presumed paradise. Without the Jews I cannot imagine traveling this path, which is a historical one and therefore one bound to history. Hence my worry that the Jewish people could lose their soul in Palestine. Perhaps the solution is to desire Palestine but *not* go there, because the task is to live among *all* the peoples of the world, with them and against them as long as they are content to remain peoples and nothing more.

Once she had become a celebrated figure, Arendt's coolness toward the national solution made some people regard her as an enemy of Israel, and this partly accounts for the vehemence of the campaign against her after the publication of her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem* in 1963, in which she made much of the cooperation of the Jewish Councils in facilitating the Final Solution.[8] Arendt had thought the trial of Eichmann by Israel a bad idea, because she felt, as she wrote to Jaspers, that the Nazi bureaucrat would be able to demonstrate "to what a huge degree the Jews helped organize their own destruction," but she was surprised by the volume of abuse her published report of the trial brought down upon her head and was inclined to attribute it to "a smear campaign... conducted on the lowest level" with the aim to destroy her reputation.

Jaspers, who by this time was aware of Arendt's weaknesses, which included an unconditionality in argument that was rarely lightened [illegible], wrote her that her book was "marvelous in its subject matter," bearing witness to her "uncompromising

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[6] Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche: Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter, 1936).

[7] Heinrich Blücher, a former Communist, was largely self-educated, but was a tremendous reader, rigorous and systematic, who became a popular and respected professor at Bard College.

[8] Her views on Israel were not the ones often ascribed to her by both critics and would-be supporters, as she made clear in a letter of 1963 to the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism, quoted by Elisabeth Young-Bruehl in *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World*, p. 361. "You know that I was a Zionist and that my reason for breaking with the Zionist organization was very different from the anti-Zionist stand of the Council: I am not against Israel on principle, I am against certain important Israeli policies. I know, or believe I know, that should catastrophe overtake this Jewish state, for whatever reasons (even reasons of their own foolishness) this would be the perhaps final catastrophe for the whole Jewish people, no matter what opinions every one of us might hold at the moment."

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desire for truth," and "a further demonstration of [her] literary powers." But it made him reflect, he added, "how infinitely naïve not to notice that the act of putting a book like this into the world is an act of aggression against 'life-sustaining lies.'"

German guilt was another subject that they discussed over the years. In 1946 Jaspers addressed this in a book that argued that all Germans were burdened with some degree of guilt, either criminal (for acts capable of objective proof and violating unequivocal laws), political (for acts committed by the state for which they had in the last analysis to accept responsibility), moral (for wrongs done under political or military orders), or metaphysical (since there is "a solidarity among men as human beings that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world.")[9] He called upon Germans to acknowledge that they bore the greatest responsibility for the events of the years from 1933 to 1945 and to seek purification by atonement. Arendt and Blücher had long discussions of the issues raised and were troubled above all by Jasper's definition of Nazi policy as a political crime. Arendt wrote:

> The Nazi crimes, it seems to me, explode the limits of the law, and that is precisely what constitutes their monstrousness. For these crimes, no punishment is severe enough. It may be essential to hang Göring, but it is totally inadequate. That is, this guilt, in contrast to all criminal guilt, oversteps and shatters any and all legal systems. That is the reason why the Nazis in Nuremberg are so smug.

Jaspers answered that he was not comfortable with this view, because

> a guilt that goes beyond all criminal guilt inevitably takes on a streak of "greatness"—of satanic greatness—which is, for me, as inappropriate for the Nazis as all the talk about the "demonic" element in Hitler and so forth.

(Although Jaspers could not have known it, this view was to be exemplified in Thomas Mann's powerful novel *Dr. Faustus*.)[10]

> It seems to me that we have to see these things in their total banality, in their prosaic triviality, because that's what truly characterizes them. Bacteria can cause epidemics that wipe out nations, but they remain merely bacteria. I regard any hint of myth and legend with horror, and everything unspecific is just such a hint.

The force of this retort must have been persuasive, for it was the idea of the banality of evil that characterized Arendt's view of the crimes of Adolf Eichmann,[11] as it did Günter Grass's 1962 novel, *The Tin Drum*, a kind of answer to Thomas Mann.

Questions of German guilt and responsibility continued to figure in the correspondence. As the literature on the resistance to Hitler began to grow, Arendt was highly skeptical; in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* she wrote of the political bankruptcy of the Resistance movement,[12] and in a letter to Jaspers she insisted that the conspirators against Hitler were concerned only with crimes against Germans and were oblivious to what they knew about the Final Solution. "Everyone who had a political role—even if he was against the regime and even if he was secretly preparing an assassination attempt on Hitler—was infected by the plague in both word and deed." Jaspers, who had known several of the leading conspirators and might, if it had not been for his chronic ill health, have joined them, had a more favorable view of their motives, although he admitted that "the Jews were of primary interest to almost no one." He was as opposed as Arendt was to the tendency to mythologize the resistance and agreed with her that the word was used very loosely. But even if the term "resistance fighter" was confined, as Arendt wished, to those "who worked *actively* to bring down the Hitler regime,"[13] he insisted that

> a hundred percent negation of the regime and daily suffering under it was not uncommon. A wild guess: perhaps 100,000 people in Germany. *Relatively*, very few; *absolutely*, a very large number.

2.

Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* appeared in its original form in 1950 and was immediately recognized as an important book. It nevertheless confused many readers because of its clumsy organization and the absence of a clear connection between its three parts, which dealt successively with anti-Semitism, nineteenth-century imperialism, and the structure of totalitarian states. In fact, the book was less and more than its title suggested: it was not a history of the rise of totalitarian states but rather a profound analysis of the essential elements and nature of totalitarianism itself and its continuing threat to freedom in the modern world.

Her argument was that twentieth-century totalitarianism had been made possible by nineteenth-century imperialism, whose philosophy of "expansion for expansion's sake," whose reliance upon racist and biological justifications, and whose ability to facilitate alliances between capital and the mob weakened the institutional structures that protected constitutional freedoms and opened the way to ruthless people who sought power for its own sake and believed, and seduced the masses into believing, that anything was possible.[14]

Implicit in this argument, and elaborated in her later works, was the suggestion that totalitarianism had not disappeared in 1945 but was inherent in modern mass society in which the intrinsic distinctiveness of particular human beings and their capacity for citizenship and independent political action were constantly threatened by artificially stimulated needs—for entertainment and other distractions—and by absorption in consumption.[15]

Jaspers was delighted with *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, which he regarded as "a major breakthrough for our political world." It was, he wrote,

> like the diagnosis and symptomatology of a fungal disease that spreads and eats up everything in its path. The carriers of the disease are intelligent the way fungi are because they do instinctively what is required of them.... They therefore have the talent of being able to obey the law of this disease without comprehending it as a whole. The result is the self-destruction of man and of these fungi themselves, which die when the body they have taken possession of dies.

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[9] Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt* (Dial Press, 1947), p. 32. Originally published as *Die Schuldfrage* (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1946).

[10] Thomas Mann, *Dr. Faustus. Das Leben des deutschen Tonsetzers Adrian Leverkühn, erzählt von einem Freunde* (Stockholm: Berman Fischer Verlag, 1947).

[11] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (Viking Penguin, 1963).

[12] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, revised edition, 1965, pp. 98–99.

[13] The late Detlev Peukert wrote in 1992 that, in contrast to other forms of dissident behavior, the term resistance should refer only to activity that was intended to make a public impact and pose a basic challenge to the regime. See my article "Good Germans" in *The New York Review*, December 17, 1992, p. 40.

[14] See the analysis in Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 29.

[15] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 127.

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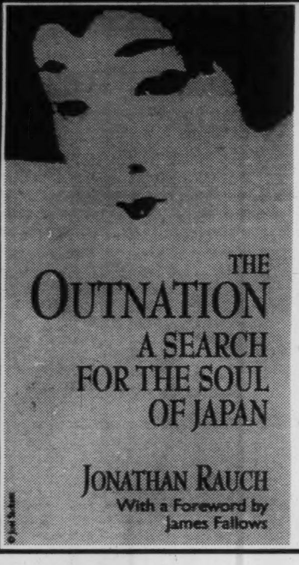
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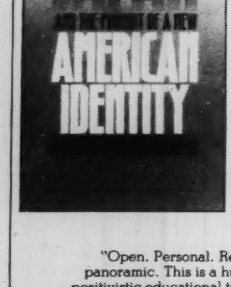

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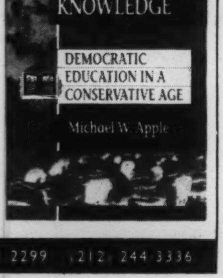

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Long preoccupation with totalitarianism affected Arendt, and to a lesser extent Jaspers, with a profound pessimism with respect to the politics and institutions of their own time. "Change and decay in all around I see" might have served as the motto for many of their exchanges, in which, indeed, the eventide was always falling fast. At the height of McCarthyism, she wrote Jaspers that the federal government was powerless and, in any case, interested only in "making big business bigger," that between them trusts and unions were eroding the position of "the small *independent* man... as a political factor" and that "good old American know-nothingness" combined with "the ideology of Americanism that is just beginning to emerge now" was promoting a process of disintegration. The balance of powers had broken down and increasingly everything was determined by public opinion, theoretically represented in Congress. In short, the society was overwhelming the republic.

> The confusion over these matters among intellectuals is immense. The blame lies with the sociologists and psychologists in whose conceptual swamps everything founders and sinks. They, too, of course, are only a symptom of the mass society...

From these gloomy reflections she was lifted momentarily by the news of the Hungarian revolt of 1956, a clear victory for freedom, in her opinion, "and, as in all the spontaneous revolutions of the last hundred years, the spontaneous appearance of a new government form *in nuce*." But the example of Hungary did nothing to inspire change in America, and pretty soon, after an immersion in the lives and writings of the Founding Fathers in preparation for her book *On Revolution*, she was writing, "How this country has gone to the dogs if you measure it by nothing but its own standards." Despite all these dire proclamations, however, Arendt never surrendered her faith in the American genius for freedom, and in the darkest days, as the Vietnam agony began, she found "solace [in] the very strong opposition here to this insane Vietnam policy."

She was less charitable toward the German Federal Republic, finding nothing to praise in its leaders, its parties, or the capacity of the Basic Law to protect civil rights. The *Wirtschaftswunder* did not impress her, and she wrote Jaspers in 1962, "This so-called republic is really like the last one. And in the long run, economic growth will not help it." Three years later, during the post-Adenauer malaise in Bonn, she wrote, in the doom-laden tone that often marked her letters to her former teacher,

> As far as the Federal Republic is concerned, we don't need to waste any more breath on it. Its decline is written all over its face.... Everybody is just waiting for a strong man to come along.

Jaspers was no less gloomy about the German future. He had originally regarded Konrad Adenauer with favor, particularly because of his pro-Western foreign policy, but he became disenchanted in 1962 when *Der Alte* began his flirtation with Charles de Gaulle, and he was outraged by the so-called Treaty of Friendship of January 1963, which he regarded as a setback for his dream of real European unification. Inspired by the Bundestag debate of March 1965 on a statute of limitations for crimes committed under National Socialism and by discussion of the need of emergency legislation to check subversion, Jaspers decided to write a book in which, as he explained to Arendt, he warned of the dangers of a swift descent

> from parliamentary state to party oligarchy, from party oligarchy to dictatorship, the "legal" route by way of the planned emergency laws and of the "inner emergency" to the further enlargement of the army and the coming together of all those tendencies, which, without the majority planning it that way, will ultimately lead to war with the East.

Arendt greatly admired the book when it was written,[16] which she compared with Jaspers's *The Intellectual Situation of the Age* of 1931. But Jaspers's analysis suffered from his belief that Bonn was Weimar. He had not properly evaluated the significance of the so-called *Spiegel* Affair of October 1962, which had shown a new spirit of grass-roots democracy in West Germany,[17] nor did he know that the first steps to a new *Ostpolitik* had already been taken. Before long Willy Brandt was in power, and things looked different. But by then Jaspers was dead.

3.

Always in the background of this remarkable correspondence was Martin Heidegger, often the subject of intense and sometimes awkward discussion. Although they had once been friends, Jaspers had broken off relations with the sage of Messkirch partly because of his ignoble treatment of Edmund Husserl and because Heidegger had once slighted his wife, but most of all for the notorious *Rektoratrede* in Freiburg in which he hailed Adolf Hitler as a leader called by destiny and sanctioned by all the primal forces of the German soul that made the Leader and the led one flesh "guided by the inexorability of that spiritual mission that the destiny of the German people forcibly impresses upon its history."[18] Arendt respected Jaspers's views, but was more forgiving of Heidegger's behavior, and indeed found excuses for it. In 1949, Jaspers wrote of Heidegger that he "impresses people with his inklings," but that he wondered whether

> someone with an impure soul—that is, a soul that is unaware of its own impurity and isn't constantly trying to expel it but continues to live thoughtlessly in filth—can someone living in that kind

---

[16] Karl Jaspers, *Wohin treibt die Bundesrepublik?* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1966).

[17] An attempt by Konrad Adenauer to prosecute the editors of the weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* for treason because the magazine had printed details of a NATO maneuver, causing a wave of popular indignation that almost toppled the government.

[18] Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universitat* (Breslau: W. G. Korn, 1933), p. 5.

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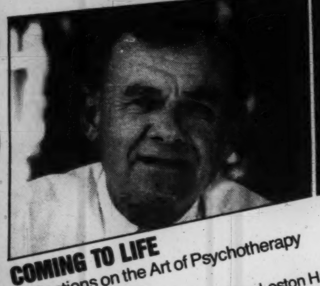

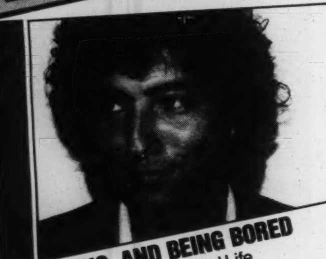

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> **of dishonesty perceive what is purest?**

Arendt answered, "What you call impurity I would call lack of character—but in the sense that he literally has none and certainly not a particularly bad one." When she went to Europe in 1949 for the first time since the end of the war, she visited Jaspers in Basel, where he had moved from Heidelberg in the previous year. She told him of her earlier relationship with Heidegger and was impressed and touched by the calmness of his reaction. She then went on to Freiburg and had two emotional meetings with Heidegger, during the second of which he apparently declared, in the presence of his wife, that Arendt had been "the passion of his life" and the inspiration of his work.[19]

Arendt's biographer has written that this confirmation of their friendship convinced her that she had been right to be loyal to the private Heidegger as opposed to the public one.[20] But the public Heidegger continued to worry her. In 1961 she was invited to Freiburg to give a lecture and informed Heidegger that she was coming. He didn't call or come to the meeting, and he apparently discouraged a younger colleague who had been invited from attending. Arendt was forced to the conclusion that, whatever their personal relationship had become, Heidegger found it "intolerable that my name appears in public, that I write books, etc." She added curiously, "I was very angry for a moment, but I'm not any longer. I feel instead that I somehow deserved what I got."

Jaspers understood her attempt to keep the two Heideggers apart. He had his own moments of sympathy with the Freiburg philosopher. In June 1966, he wrote Arendt,

> It seems to me that there is something appealing about Heidegger at the moment. I've experienced this and think back on it with nostalgia and horror. There is something in him, and something substantial, but you can't rely on anything with him. And awful things happen.

To separate the private from the public Heidegger, the philosopher from the political figure, was, he reminded her, probably a forlorn and even dangerous endeavor.

> I don't think it desirable to "leave Heidegger in peace." He is a presence, and one that everyone who wants an excuse for his own Nazi past likes to fall back on. The significance of his behavior seems to me of no small consequence for current politics in the Federal Republic.

If this was an appeal to Arendt's political sense, it did not persuade her to sever her ties to Heidegger. As the years passed, indeed, his political actions seemed to become increasingly forgivable in her eyes. Plato too, she pointed out, had a softness for dictators, and this failing should perhaps be imputed less to character "than to what the French call a *déformation professionelle*." And then, with a sentimental suspension of judgment that was remarkable for so skeptical and conscientious a critic of the politics of her time, she added, "For the wind that blows through Heidegger's thinking—like that which still sweeps toward us after thousands of years from the work of Plato—does not spring from the century he happens to live in. It comes from the primeval, and what it leaves behind is something perfect, something which, like everything perfect (in Rilke's words), falls back to where it came from."[21]

Twenty-four years have passed since the end of this marvelous correspondence. In that time there is no doubt that Jaspers's reputation has somewhat diminished in comparison with that of Heidegger. Nothing awakens curiosity better than controversy, and the battles between the deconstructionists and their opponents, as well as the continuing debate over Heidegger's Nazi past,[22] have certainly attracted new readers to his writings in numbers unmatched by those who have turned to Jaspers's *Philosophy*, however unjust that may seem.

As for Hannah Arendt, she has gone from strength to strength. Recently a traveler boarding a train from Frankfurt to Hamburg was greeted by the announcement, "I welcome you on board the InterCity Express *Hannah Arendt*—whoever that was—and wish you a pleasant journey." Somewhat later, as they were well under way, the conductor announced over the public address system, "Hannah Arendt was a *Dichterin* [poet or author]." Finally, shortly before Kassel, came a new announcement, "Incidentally, I have meanwhile learned—Hannah Arendt was a *Philosophin*."[23]

Hannah Arendt is admittedly difficult to categorize, but there is no doubt that her contributions to political thought, always provocative and controversial, are again arousing interest and have taken on a new relevance. This is true, not least of all, because of the unremitting stubbornness of her search for truth and the love of freedom that breathes in every line she wrote. But it is also, as Margaret Canovan has pointed out, because the East European revolutions have given some support to her claim that power is less a matter of weapons and resources than of people acting in concert.[24] ☐

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[19] Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 246–247.

[20] Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt*, p. 247.

[21] Hannah Arendt, "Martin Heidegger at Eighty," *The New York Review*, Oct. 21, 1971, p. 54.

[22] See Thomas Sheehan, "A Normal Nazi," *The New York Review*, January 14, 1993, pp. 30ff.

[23] For this information I am indebted to Gerhard Casper.

[24] Canovan, *Hannah Arendt*, pp. 1f.

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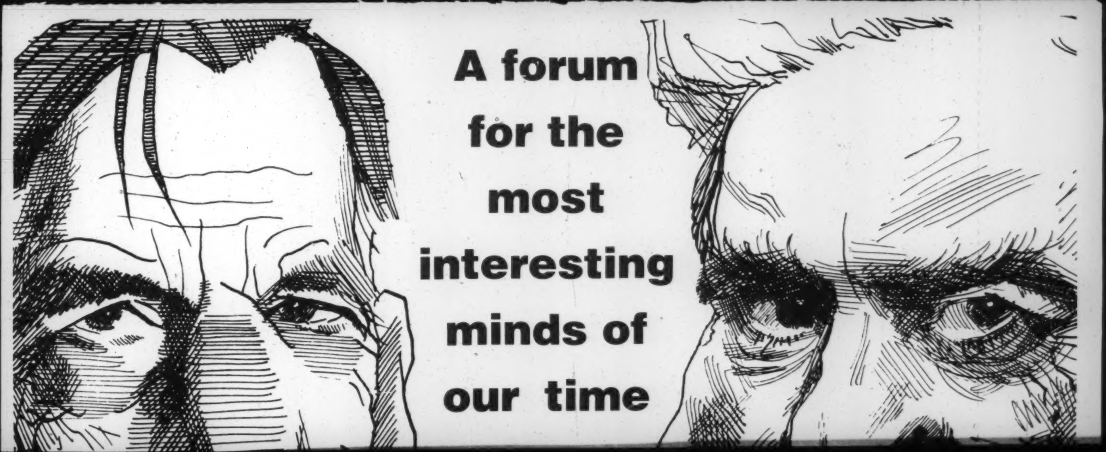
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The economics of global renown oblige small countries to specialize. Holland has its great painters—Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals—and Denmark its writers: Kierkegaard, Hans Christian Andersen, Isak Dinesen. The notion of a Danish painter worthy of international appreciation taxes our mental budget, and that of a Golden Age of Danish painting seems positively extravagant. Yet there was one, roughly from the 1820s to the 1840s, fitted into the cozy Biedermeier era, when northern Europe, between the Napoleonic storms and the upheavals of 1848, sought domestic peace. Not that Denmark had done very well out of Napoleon; it had seen its Navy defeated by the English in 1801, large portions of Copenhagen destroyed in a British bombardment of 1807, its grain trade and state bank ruined by seven years of subsequent fighting as Napoleon's ally, and its possession of Norway given over to Sweden by the peace treaty of Kiel in 1814. Times were lively but hard in the chastened little kingdom during the Golden Age. One art critic has suggested that the small physical scale of Danish paintings in the 1820s reflects the reduced life style of the middle classes.

Christen Købke: One of the Turrets at Frederiksborg Castle, *1834–1835*

Distinguished by steeples, castles, and coolly classic white houses erected after the great fire of 1795, Copenhagen, with a population of about a hundred thousand, was picturesque, and the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, housed in the Charlottenborg Palace, produced, under the aegis of the painter and professor Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, a sudden generation of young painters. Of these, Christen Købke, a short and staid baker's son who began to study at the Academy when he was twelve, did not especially stand out. The portraitists Christian Jensen and Willem Marstrand both had reputations higher than Købke's; the most famous contemporary Danish artist of all was Bertel Thorvaldsen, a sculptor who lived in Rome. Købke, who had ten siblings, was a pious self-doubter and, until his wealthy father died in 1843, under no financial pressure to make a splash. He often gave his canvases away as gifts, sold a mere two to the Royal Collection, and was twice rejected for membership in the Academy. In 1848, at the age of thirty-seven, he died, after a decade of family deaths, straitened circumstances, and artistic wane. Only toward the end of the nineteenth century did his reputation begin to revive. Now he is considered the best painter of his age—"The Golden Age" has become "The Age of Købke"—if not the greatest Danish painter of all time.

Yet he is still barely known outside Denmark. Sanford Schwartz's *Christen Købke* is the first American book about this painter. The most extensive previous consideration in English was to be found in Kasper Monrad's fine catalog notes for the Købke items in the 1984 exhibition at the National Gallery in London, *Danish Painting: The Golden Age*. This fall, a similar exhibit will be coming to the Los Angeles County Museum and then to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the meantime, Schwartz's elegant, though annoyingly miniaturized, album will serve as a primer and appetizer.

Schwartz brings to art criticism a broad knowledge and a hungry but patient sensibility. One assumes, from his reference to sources in Danish, that he knows the language or mastered it for this critical occasion. He is one of a flock of youngish American critics to show the influence of Pauline Kael, echoing the passionate film reviewer's gangling, slangy, heavily personalized, go-for-all-of-it style. "Købke," Schwartz tells us, "was still on his anti-Eckersberg roll—still trying to shuck his first teacher." Købke's father was "a big-time baker," and the hyphenated adjectives don't stop there. Købke's contemporaries produce "sketch-like, of-the-moment landscapes," Wilhelm Bendz's "dark-yet-streaky pictures seem far afield from the staid Eckersberg," and one of Købke's paintings presents "an extraordinary sense of see-throughness."

Schwartz rather revels in awkward phrasing: "In tone, Købke's work runs the range from being somewhat blank to being youthfully—charmingly—trustful to conveying a jet of pure, frank, penetrating awareness." Conveying his own jet of awareness, Schwartz beclouds simple meanings with an ingenuous wordiness: "His art is one of the products of the social and personal liberties of the era after Napoleon, but it should be said that Købke wasn't in revolt from another way of being an artist." As the critic ponders the canvases, his subtle sensations successfully defy expression:

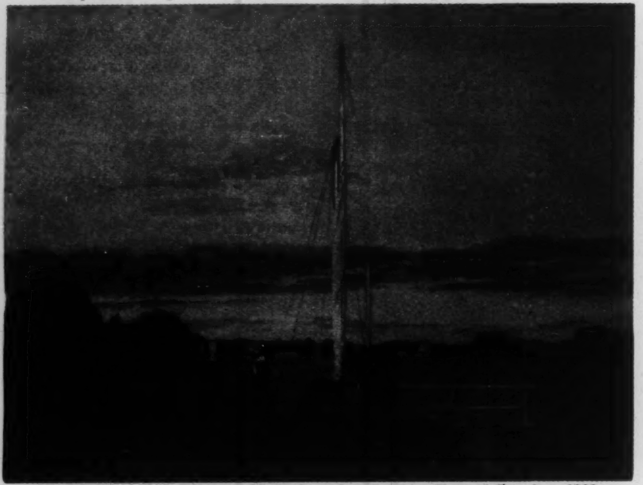
> The pictures might present the state of someone who is mildly ravaged.
>
> When he sets a green wagon near a red fence, for instance, the surrounding colors are so balanced that the red and the green spring out on their own.
>
> There is a melancholy mood to Købke's pictures, but it arrives from between the cracks.

Not the cracks, presumably, of the aging paint. The vivid, chatty viewing persona at times turns petulant: of Købke's later, grander, duller works, Schwartz complains, "We're not lured into thinking about how he made these pictures," and of Købke's friend and student, Johan Lundbye, we are amused to read, "A viewer quits Lundbye's company with the thought that this man was too talented and too smart to have made his protagonist a distant cow."

Yet, on the not totally satisfactory basis of the color reproductions in this book, one can only agree with Schwartz's basic appreciation of his subject. "Erectness, precision, and gentleness" excellently sums up Købke's virtues. Gentleness isn't commonly listed as a virtue in visual art, but in the surpassingly beautiful canvas *The Landscape Painter F. Sødring,* 1832 (see next page), the quality characterizes both the subject's expression and the way in which Købke's painterly attention envelops and modulates every surface, every texture, from the pencil drawings pinned to the gray-paneled wall to Sødring's pink-tinged right thumb, from the cushion strings and folded camp stool along the lower edge to the tilted oval mirror bisected by the upper edge. The little still life of objects on the table by Sødring's elbow is marked by the tonal hot spot of the quietly colored portrait, a rectangular red case like a distillation of the pink planes that compose the young painter's faintly quizzical, pale-browed face—a face which is treated, like faces in Vermeer and Manet, dispassionately, as one among a number of objects defined by color and light. An earlier portrait of another colleague, *Marstrand at the Easel in Eckersberg's Studio* (1829), is relatively loaded with chiaroscuro and dramatic atmosphere; it is the quiet, emotionless tone of Købke's mature treatment that enables his somewhat abstract color to strike its balances and to manifest what Schwartz calls "freshly felt formal tension."

As Schwartz says, "Købke's endeavor is remarkably lean and optical, and it's without sentiment." Such an endeavor appeals to the twentieth century, where the Victorians would be bored and possibly alarmed by it; their *horror vacui* has been replaced by our own horror of clutter. Købke worked on the edge of emptiness. His instinct was to work small, beginning with drawings of a meticulous precision, or with oil sketches brushed onto pieces of paper that fit into the lid of his portable paintbox. His genius was an intimate one, nurtured by Danish coziness and Nordic reserve. Many of his paintings, including some detailed landscapes, are less than a foot square.

His several paintings of Frederiksborg Castle—one of the biggest things in Denmark—are among his largest, but the most arresting of them are the ones that contain the least amount of castle, the two rooftop views painted in 1834–1835. Brick chimneys and ornate copper turrets loom before a far brown landscape and an empty blue-green sky. The canvases, measuring over five by five feet, were painted to share the walls of his parents' large new dining room with two grisaille paintings by Købke of circular plaster reliefs by the sculptor Thorvaldsen, *Night* and *Day*. The rooftops seem raked by a setting or rising sun, and Schwartz, taking as a sign the stork on one chimney, bundles the goddesses and the shifting roof perspectives into a single theme: "Viscerally, at least, the four pictures together become a sort of meditation on the passage of time, on being brought into the world and being taken out of it." What makes the roof views appealing now, and Købke's fuller views of the castle much less so, is their fragmentary and minimal content; as in an unpopulated plaza by de Chirico, an eerie absence shouts out. In the Dane's later paintings of, say, a cliff in Capri (*Marina Grande, Capri*, 1839–1840) or *The Forum: Pompeii, with Vesuvius in the Distance* (1841) the absence is, as it were, missing, with nothing to take its place but a conventional grandeur, heavy on antique ochre.



View from the Embankment of Lake Sortedam, Looking Toward Østerbro, *1838*

The grandeur in his best landscapes is not imported from ancient Rome but found in the modest country around Copenhagen, where houses and people are never out of sight. In two masterly paintings from 1838, both called *View from the Embankment of Lake Sortedam*, human figures are silhouetted on lakeside docks, clustered at the base of a central vertical—a sail-wrapped mast in one, a flagpole in the other. The mood is benevolent, yet tinged by silence, desolation, and poignance. In the smaller, though more stunning, of the views, looking toward Østerbro, an ominous evening shadow darkens the group, in their playful assortment of hats, as they make things tight at their end of their sail.

The melancholy that flits through Andersen's fables and pursues Kierkegaard through his whirlwind of impersonation and polemic haunts the innocent, geometrically taut world of Købke. The absence one feels, perhaps, is that of the madonnas and crucified Christs, gods and goddesses and nymphs and satyrs and idealized historical figures for whom landscape hitherto has been merely background. Brought to the foreground, will not nature look blank and empty? Købke's paintings are full of light but it is generally a dry, less than refulgent light; thready little white lines—almost his signature—appear on the edges of buildings and collars and wands of grass. His trees, with their blanched leaves and twigs, have a spectral pallor. His exquisite drawing emphasizes line over mass, so that some of his portrait heads quite lack a sense of weight, of existing in the round.

Others of his portraits are superb, with startling psychological presence. His portrait of *Christian Petersen* (1833) uses the same pink, planear tones as the portrait of Sødring a year earlier, but the face is more troubled and complex, without distracting us entirely from the equable rendering of the flowered brown vest, the lush velvet coat collar, and the splendidly fitted and rendered shirt and collar. The alert, searching, and even agonized face of Lauritz Lyngbye, painted the same year, takes all the focus, however; Schwartz rates it at the Romantic end of Købke's range, heated and pent-up where the portrait of Sødring is cool and mellow:

> It's hard to recall other paintings of the Romantic period, except Géricault's images of soldiers in moments of doubt and confusion, that convey so freshly the Romantic ache, the mixture of contrary yearnings.

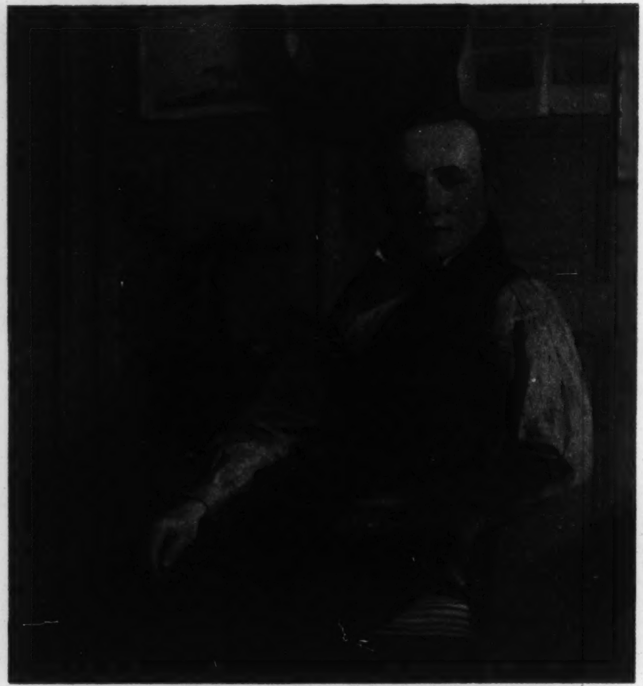
Between these extremes lies a remarkable variety of Danish visages—the lumpy, flatly colored *Ida Thiele* (1832), one of the best portraits of an infant ever painted; *An Old Sailor* and *An Old Farmer Woman* (both 1832), full of the pained dignity of age; *Male Model* (1833), an unblinking, antiheroic, yet magnificent male nude; the superbly rounded and realized pencil sketches *Professor F. C. Sibbern* (1833) and *Young Girl* (undated); chalky portraits of his rather crafty-looking parents (1835); the swarthy, hypnotically gazing *Study for the Portrait of Prefect J.A. Graah* (1837–1838); and the dashing *Portrait of a Naval Officer* (1834), a companion in picture-making to the portrait of Sødring, with the same dusky-green background and air of urbane good humor.

From portrait to portrait, Købke's intentions seem to fluctuate. Some suggest a less crusty Rembrandt, others a less smoothly modeled Ingres. His mentor Eckersberg's travels had included a year of study in Paris with David, and he had brought back to Denmark a French neoclassicism whose rigor and thinness were, to Købke, both a release and a confinement.

Eckersberg preached, not quite paradoxically, perspectival construction and life studies. "Draw from nature, no matter what it is," he exhorted. An animated oil sketch of riverside grasses by Købke was included, eleven years ago, in the Museum of Modern Art show *Before Photography*; introducing the catalog, Peter Galassi pointed out that the fifteenth-century pictorial invention of linear perspective opened the way not only for such marvels of balanced architectural clarity as della Francesca's and Uccello's crystalline panoramas but for the overlappings, fragmentariness, and surprises in apparent size found in Dutch painters like de Witte and Saenredam and later, in Degas. Købke's rooftops are an impressive instance of what might be called the proto-photographic eye, which includes and excludes not according to an idealistic hierarchy of significance but in mute, enigmatic acceptance of what falls within the viewer's frame.

Eckersberg's proposed turn from the exhausted pomp of historical and mythological tableaux to *plein air* sketches in the Copenhagen suburbs was undoubtedly healthy, and in the forward direction of Impressionism. But Danish critics had their doubts: one wrote of Købke,

> This artist has distinguished himself by conscientious truth and simplicity, but unfortunately also by a conspicuous indifference to his choice of subjects. The latter is highly regrettable, inasmuch as nature possesses much that is trivial and common that cannot serve as a worthy object for art.



The Landscape Painter F. Sødring, *1832*

The issue is metaphysical: If a thing exists in nature, how can it be trivial, and how can it not be, if it is not real? Does art involve the rendering of the actual, or the reordering of it? Is something extra, beyond skillful human imitation, needed to make nature into art? The appreciative Schwartz comes up against these questions in considering two ambitious, hard-worked canvases that Købke, seeking a wider public, pitched in a grander mode: *View Outside the North Gate of the Citadel* (1834) and *Østerbro in Morning Light* (1836). The former, Schwartz concludes, "teeters between greatness and emptiness" and ends with "a heart that is too small for the body it's placed in"; the latter, similarly, "seems undernourished. It has more sweat and preparation than innards."

Surviving letters from Købke describe the sweat and preparation, and the obscure depths of struggle from which he prays for God's assistance. His reputation scarcely needs the two big works. Less effortfully, he achieved a dozen or so masterpieces that give him his niche in global renown. Still, one would like to test Schwartz's negative conclusions about the two ambitious pictures. Is there some subtle poetry, some precious grace of rendering, the critic has missed? But he has had the advantage of seeing the paintings themselves, where they hang in Copenhagen, and, infuriatingly, the color reproductions that Timken Publishers have given the pictures in question are too small to judge, as are a number of others. Repeatedly, I had to take a magnifying glass to the color plates. With an opportunity to reproduce many of the smaller paintings near their actual size, the designers have chosen to make them miniatures, with lavish margins. True, a few bled pages do amplify the details so that Købke's stabbingly deft, increasingly "blocky, runny, halting" brushwork can be studied, but such pages are three in number. On the rest, for whatever reasons of cost or style, this volume, meant to enlarge Christen Købke's reputation, presents him as almost too small to see. ☐

The Case Against Science

Understanding the Present: Science and the Soul of Modern Man
by Brian Appleyard.
Doubleday, 269 pp., $23.50

Timothy Ferris

Bertrand Russell concluded his 1933 book *The Scientific Outlook* with a chapter warning what life might be like in "the world which would result if scientific technique were to rule unchecked." Many of Russell's prophecies sound quaint today: He feared the establishment of a world government that forbade the public from reading *Hamlet* and jailed anybody who wouldn't work. He was concerned that medical advances would make life so long and safe that thrill-seekers would commit suicide for recreation ("To fall through the air before a million spectators may come to be thought a glorious death even if it has no purpose but the amusement of the holiday crowd"). He assumed that Esperanto would have become the universal language. But Russell's prognostications served merely to ornament his more philosophical concerns, which as one might expect have held up rather better. Science, he cautioned, was gravitating from knowledge toward power, undergoing a "passage from contemplation to manipulation":

> We may seek knowledge of an object because we love the object or because we wish to have power over it. The former impulse leads to the kind of knowledge that is contemplative, the latter to the kind that is practical. In the development of science the power impulse has increasingly prevailed over the love impulse.... Man has been disciplined hitherto by his subjection to nature. Having emancipated himself from this subjection, he is showing something of the defects of slave-turned-master.

Russell was writing before the ante had been upped by innovations like the global deployment of 50,000 nuclear weapons, the depletion of atmospheric ozone by CFCs, and the erosion of literacy by television. So it's hardly surprising that controversy continues to flare up over the Faustian question of whether science has at last gone too far.

This year's Faust flap centers on the publication of *Understanding the Present: Science and the Soul of Modern Man*. Its author, the English journalist Brian Appleyard, decries what he calls "the appalling spiritual damage that science has done," declares that science "has gone too far, that it is potentially out of control, and that it now threatens to throw our civilization out of balance," and urges that "now is the time to resist."

When the book appeared in England last year the press was quick to take sides, with the former *Times* editor William Rees-Mogg in the *Literary Review* tilting toward Appleyard's position while the scientific journal *Nature* branded the book "dangerous." At a debate held before an audience of nine hundred at the Institute of Education in London the novelist Fay Weldon supported Appleyard. She was opposed by the biologist Lewis Wolpert, who maintained that

> Appleyard and his supporters have not progressed from the position of Galileo's opponents. They cannot bear to accept what they see down the telescope. They don't understand it; they are envious and so they wish to suppress it.

The book's publication in the US in March occasioned yet another debate, this between Appleyard and myself at the YMHA in New York, with a brief rematch staged two days later on CNN.

Appleyard's case can be summarized in four points.

1) Science has no values, but is based, as Appleyard puts it, "on an essential amorality." By encouraging the study of how things work rather than what they mean, "science forces us to separate our values from our knowledge of the world."

2) Science is irresistible—or, as Appleyard puts it, "spiritually corrosive, burning away ancient authorities and traditions...unable to coexist with anything." Religion in particular has been wrestled off the mat by science, with the result that the public is degenerating toward a fruitless worship of technological and scientific grandiosities: "Our vague awareness of and gratitude for the ease and ubiquity of technology prepares us to accept the larger claim of science that it alone can lead us to God." As religion, philosophy, and other putatively more humane systems of thought slink from the field of combat, "progressively science is becoming the culture of the entire world."

3) Science is thus responsible for a general moral and spiritual decline in Western culture. Since it drives out value-oriented systems but evinces no values of its own with which to replace them, science leaves us feeling bereft, robbed of our humanity. "Liberal society is unstable and in deterioration," Appleyard writes. "The scientific understanding as a basis for human life is radically inadequate, yet it continues to triumph. As a result, human life itself will become inadequate. That is what there is to worry about."

4) Therefore science must be "resisted." Appleyard also speaks of "humbling" science. As to what he means by this he is vague. During our first debate I asked him what he would advise us all to do if we agreed with this position. He replied that he had no program of action, that it was "not my job" to do so. This I suppose is a defensible position for an intellectual—or a journalist, for that matter—to assume, but it does tend to leave his argument dangling.

In the absence of a clear conclusion, however, it is still possible to criticize Appleyard's premises. The issue of whether science lacks values has been investigated by several thoughtful authors, although for some reason few of their ideas have found their way into his book, which simply treats the amorality of science as a given. A noteworthy analysis is to be found in Theodore Roszak's *Where the Wasteland Ends*. Roszak maintains that science has values, all right, but of a disagreeably blinkered and power-hungry sort. Scientific technology, he writes, "communicates nothing so efficiently as itself: its attendant values and ideologies, its obsession with power-knowledge, above all the underdeveloped worldview from which it derives." Others see more positive values as inherent to the scientific method: Jacob Bronowski, for one, emphasizing the role that science played in the rise of the liberal democracies:

> Like the other creative activities which grew from the Renaissance, science has humanized our values. Men have asked for freedom, justice and respect precisely as the scientific spirit has spread among them. The dilemma of today is not that the human values cannot control a mechanical science. It is the other way about: the scientific spirit is more human than the machinery of governments. We have not let either the tolerance or the empiricism of science enter the parochial rules by which we still try to prescribe the behavior of nations. Our conduct as states clings to a code of self-interest which science, like humanity, has long left behind.

My own impression is that a number of admirable values are manifest in science. Science is for instance committed to learning the truth—seriously committed to the ascertainment of verifiable truth—and this is not, as yet, a universal or even a particularly popular human attitude. Moreover, science from its inception has been a friend of free speech, the enemy of what the amateur scientist Thomas Jefferson called "every form of tyranny over the mind of man." The scientific community today, for all its faults, remains generally open and unsecretive, international and egalitarian: It is no accident that scientists are to be found at the forefront among those who call for global ecological responsibility, racial and sexual equality, better education, an end to hunger, a fair break for indigenous peoples, and other enlightened values. The opinion that science is amoral is not, as Appleyard assumes, fundamental to the world view of every scientist and philosopher of science. More reasonably it is to be attributed, as Stephen Toulmin attributes it, to "the factual, unemotional, antiphilosophical, class-structured, and role-oriented attitudes of the English professional classes between the two world wars." But I concede that many scholars, including many scientists, agree with Appleyard on this point, and in any event an opinion about it one way or the other is not essential to the case against antiscience.

When it comes to the allegedly pervasive and irresistible influence of science in society, Appleyard ventures onto sandier ground. Is it really plausible to assert that science permeates an American society in which only one in five high-school graduates has taken a physics course, only one in four citizens has heard that the universe is expanding, 21 percent think the sun orbits the earth, and nearly half the public (and a quarter of all college graduates) believes that "God created man pretty much in his present form at one time within the last 10,000 years"? If pressed on this point Appleyard cites the ubiquitous influence of technology: When he writes, for instance, that "in the developed world, we cannot dress, feed, travel, procreate or be entertained without the intervention of science," he means not science but technology.

Yet science is, after all, distinct from technology. Science in principle has to do with knowledge, technology with power. To confound the two, as Appleyard does, is to equate all scientific research with that darker side of the empirical model which Russell called "power science." The conclusion thereby is mandated by the flawed premise. By insisting that science is primarily an engine for turning out gadgets, Appleyard is led to the odd implication that to be surrounded by machines is to be immersed in science. If so, every viewer of a soap opera is a student of electrodynamics (since that is how television works) and the slack-jawed youth playing Gameboy in the next airline seat, though he neither knows nor cares about the chip inside the toy or the en-

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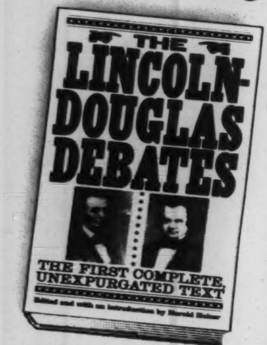
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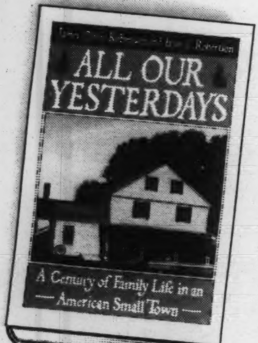

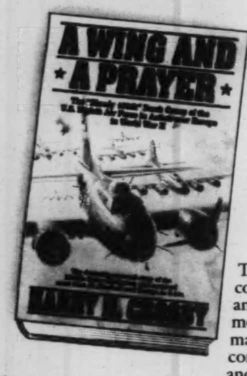

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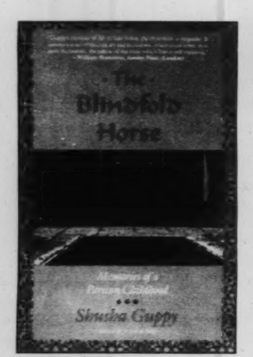

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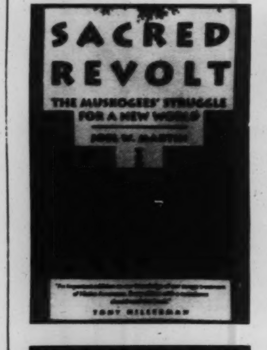

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gines on the plane or the air through which it swims, is properly to be viewed as a student of computer science, aerodynamics, and geophysics. Had *Understanding the Present* been written as a critique of technology rather than of science it might have called less attention to itself, but it would also have been a more consistent book.

Is science to be held responsible for a decline in Western morals? That there has been such a decline I would tend to agree. I think, for instance, that it was a mistake to have excised the study of ethics and values from much of our public school curriculum, as if in the name of cultural relativism we ought not to condemn lying, theft, or rape, for fear that these practices may be cherished in Paris or Pakistan. But surely *science* is not to blame for this lamentable state of affairs. Were that the case, we should expect to find scientists themselves, immersed as they are every working day in what Appleyard portrays as the undiluted amorality of science, behaving less ethically than do lawyers or bankers or politicians. And that is not the case. Nor, if we look to the darker sinks of moral degradation, do we find an abundance of science there. The schools with metal detectors guarding the doors tend not to be the ones offering courses in biophysics, and neither crack houses nor prisons are crowded with organic chemists. Like the sentimental notion that art promotes morality, the image of science as a moral corrosive is at best a funhouse-mirror reflection of reality.

As to what is to be done, one can sympathize with Appleyard's reluctance to state a program, for this would amount to envisioning a system of moral certitude that could govern our lives without also indulging in the abuses propagated by the religious and philosophical systems that have played this very role in the past. Appleyard writes nostalgically of the more value-oriented societies of earlier times, with their relative freedom from doubt and uncertainty, but pays little attention to the nasty tendency of such societies to be frighteningly intolerant of those who don't share their values. In 1609, the year at which his book begins its tale of the rise of science, there was not a single public library on the face of the earth, torture formed an integral part of many European legal systems, and witchcraft was a capital offense. (Johannes Kepler, the astronomer who discovered the phenomenology of solar system dynamics, was obliged to defend his mother in a witchcraft trial during which she was shown instruments of torture and threatened with their use.) The rise of free secular societies attests to the generality of the belief that abuses of this sort represent too high a price to pay for the emoluments of spiritual certitude.

If Appleyard is reticent about such matters, he is scathing on the subject of the liberal democratic tradition, the rise of which he rightly associates with the rise of science, and therefore deplores. "We are clearly in a decadent phase and, I think, a terminal one," he writes. "The decadence arises from the obvious failure of liberalism to transmit any value other than bland tolerance." Thus he dismisses every contribution of liberal democracy from the Bill of Rights to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Appleyard even has a few sympathetic words to say about the death sentence handed down against Salman Rushdie by the fundamentalist government of Iran, an action that, he asserts, "bewildered liberal Westerners," ill-nourished as they are on a thin gruel of feeble tolerance. "What is the virtue in tolerance if we have found the truth?" he asks, stating what he supposes to be the official Iranian line. "And surely to be religious at all means that you have found the truth. Liberals can only pretend to have private truths because they are not prepared to back them with their lives." So much, then, for all the poor liberals who died fighting, say, in World War II. Without benefit of fanatical convictions, they knew not what they did.

Appleyard's conviction that science is really all about power shines forth from the first paragraph of the introduction to his book, in which he recalls

> when I was perhaps seven or eight asking my father, an engineer, how much water could be held by a water tower close to our home. He worked it out on the spot. I was dumbstruck and made uneasy by this power. It inspired me to imitate him by developing a facility for mental arithmetic which I would use to impress other children.

Viewed by these lights science is less a way of learning things than a means of intimidating and impressing others. "I began to acquire a facility with the concepts of science and to use them to humble my artistic coevals," Appleyard adds. "...I sensed something dangerous and ominous in this strange wisdom."

Jacob Bronowski had a lot to say about the power-science paradigm. He regarded it as a throwback to the traditions of black magic. "The central opposition between magic and science is the opposition between power and knowledge," Bronowski wrote, in *Magic, Science, and Civilization.* The practitioners of black magic mistakenly believed that one could exert power over nature without understanding it: The sorcerer's spell is said to work provided that he draws the chalk circles just right and recites the magic words exactly, even though he knows not why it works. The founders of the Royal Society in London cast just such spells, to demonstrate that they *don't* work. The reason they don't work, Bronowski argued, is that "you cannot make a distinction between power and knowledge." The magician seeks power without knowledge, and fails. The scientist, seeking knowledge, gains both.

Appleyard says he is happy that we have scientific knowledge. But he is made uneasy by scientific power, because he thinks scientists have begun to misuse it, that they are out to claim hegemony over the high ground of beauty and truth. Science, he asserted in our CNN debate, has "started to turn itself into a religion." But since science has no values—or few values, compared to religion—it is unsuited to this role, and to embrace science as one's religion is to become spiritually bereft. I agree that science has no business acting as a religion. To do so would be to blunder far beyond its proper province, as the Roman Catholic Church did when it set itself up as an authority on the structure of the physical universe, an error that led to its literally disastrous condemnation of Galileo.

But what makes Appleyard think that scientists want to establish a Church of Science? The answer, prosaically enough, turns out to be that he is exercised about a few extravagant statements made recently by leading scientists in their popular books. Most of all, he is angry with Stephen Hawking, who in the final paragraph of his best seller, *A Brief History of Time,* flirts with the idea that to arrive at an ultimate theory of physics might in some sense mean that "we would know the mind of God."* Appleyard is similarly offended that the Nobel Laureate Leon Lederman titled his recent book *The God Particle*, and that the physicist Paul Davies called *his* book *The Mind of God*, and that the astrophysicist George Smoot, announcing at a press conference the detection by the Cosmic Background Explorer satellite of what is known technically as the microwave quadrapole moment, volunteered that "If you're religious, it's like looking at God."

Much of this God talk by scientists strikes me, too, as prideful and overweening. I suspect that the scientific community has to some extent been corrupted by the blandishments of television producers, book publishers, literary editors, and magazine editors, who appreciate that religion sells. Politicians as well have played a role in this process. The physicist Steven Weinberg, testifying at a congressional hearing about the Superconducting Super Collider, a costly new particle accelerator, was asked by Representative Harris Fawell of Illinois, "Will this make us find God?" prompting a foe of SSC funding to remark, "If this machine does that I am going to come around to support it."

Were God-mongering a mainstream activity among scientists, they would richly deserve the thrashing dealt them in Appleyard's book. But it is not. Few invocations of the Lord's name are to be found in the pages of the *Astrophysical Journal*, *Cell*, or such works as Weinberg's *Gravitation and Cosmology* or Hawking and G.F.R. Ellis's *The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time*. Even among those popular science books that dare grapple with the concept of the Deity, one finds, if one opens the book and actually reads what is written there, that the sentiments expressed are almost without exception much more modest and unprepossessing that Appleyard would have us believe. Typical of Paul Davies's *The Mind of God* is this considered passage:

> If the universe really has an explanation and it can't explain itself, then it must be explained by something outside itself—e.g., God. But what, then, explains God? This age-old "who made God" conundrum is in danger of pitching us into an infinite regress. The only escape, it would seem, is to assume that God can somehow "explain himself," which is to say that God is a necessary being.

George Smoot, asked later about his "looking at God" remark, cautioned that "people talk to me because of what I have to say about cosmology, not God," and added, modestly enough: "I do think that cosmology is about philosophy and religion as well as science. Our work changes culture, like the first Moon landing did—people see themselves in a different perspective. But they still have to work out how they fit into it." This sort of measured reflection may qualify as the "bland tolerance" Appleyard condemns, but it hardly poses an emergency so grave as to justify society's disqualifying a group of intellectuals from speculating about theological issues simply because they happen also to be scientists.

The real target of Appleyard's book would appear to be not science but scientism, the belief that science provides not *a* path to truth, but the *only* path. Scientism flourished briefly in the nineteenth century, when a few thinkers, impressed by such triumphs as Newtonian dynamics and the second law of thermodynamics, permitted themselves to imagine that science might soon be able to predict everything from next month's weather to next year's stock market crash. Today we expect that that will never happen, and we ought to be able to muster the sophistication to recognize such claims as hyperbolic. Lederman's "God particle" is but the Higgs boson, carrier of a field thought to apportion mass to protons and neutrons, and the so-called "theory of everything," if it can be written, will provide a unified account of elementary interactions involving the four fundamental forces of nature, not love or war or the mind of God. Information theory tells us that if the entire universe were melted down into silicon chips, this ultimate computer could not even predict its own future. And so scientism today is advocated by only a tiny minority of scientists, few among whom have paid much serious attention to epistemological issues of any sort.

For Appleyard to admit this would have meant his writing a narrower book, one that might have been titled *Understanding Scientism: How a Few Scientists Sometimes Get Too Big for Their Britches*. But this would have been intolerable for an ambitious journalist: Appleyard like the rest of us is caught up in a pop culture of literary Napoleonism, in which the only books that count are those that ring up big sales. And that is why *Understanding the Present* winds up being as extravagant and empty as the cosmos itself. □

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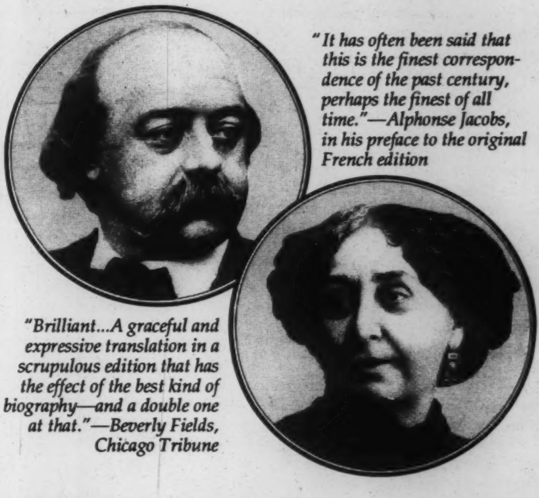
*As so often happens, what Hawking actually wrote is more circumspect than what he is widely thought to have written. He suggests that revelation would come not so much from the theory itself as from widespread discussion about the theory. The relevant passage reads: "...[I]f we do discover a complete theory, it should in time be understandable in broad principle by everyone, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God." Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam, 1988), p. 175. But Hawking often goes out of his way to write and say things he thinks will be controversial, and he succeeded here.

FLAUBERT–SAND

The Correspondence

TRANSLATED BY FRANCIS STEEGMULLER AND BARBARA BRAY

With a Foreword by Francis Steegmuller



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Twenty-first Century Blues

Alan Ryan

Preparing for the Twenty-first Century
by Paul Kennedy.
Random House, 428 pp., $25.00

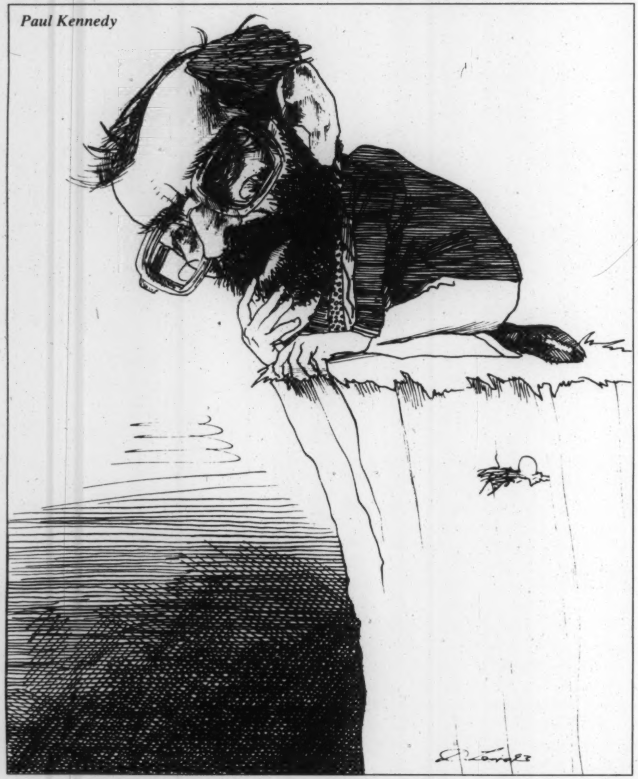
The old cliché defines history as "philosophy teaching by examples." A historian studying the examples provided by the past few years might come to very desperate conclusions about what philosophy has been telling us. Euphoria at the end of the cold war has given place to alarm at the horrors unleashed by ethnic rivalries in the Balkans and Armenia, by Hindu fanaticism in India, and Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt. Gloom at the depressed economic condition of the US, Germany, Japan, and most of Europe is deepened by the knowledge that when the depressed economies revive, their destructive impact on the environment will pick up too.

In the developed world, medical advances are adding handicapped children to the burdens of the social services as well as more nonworking elderly people to those dependent on the working population; in developing countries they add more mouths to those the farmers already cannot feed. Those who fear that history's message is that every silver lining has a cloud are much in need of a sensible account of what the recent past can tell us about the fairly near future. They will find it in *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, but it is not cheerful reading.

Paul Kennedy is a very accomplished historian, and *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* has all the virtues that made *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* such a success. Its reach is global, and the questions it asks are large and pressing. Its essence is quickly summarized: the world faces three potentially unmanageable threats, at least to social and political stability and at worst to bare survival—the population explosion, environmental degradation, and runaway technological innovation. They pose an obvious question: Can we manage these changes rationally and humanely, or shall we find ourselves at their mercy as we traditionally have?

Professor Kennedy's book—two long extracts have recently appeared in these pages—is, however, better at synthesizing vast amounts of very diverse information than at coming to conclusions. Shall we find the twenty-first century exceedingly dangerous if we do not prepare for it? The answer is plainly yes. Are we prepared for it? The answer is plainly no. Can we prepare for it? Professor Kennedy seems unsure. It rather looks as if he thinks we cannot, but hardly likes to say so. A recent article by Kennedy in the *Financial Times*[1] sets out a list of virtuous policies that the developed world ought to pursue to assist environmentally sensitive, demographically restrained development elsewhere—among them, for example, saving forests by equipping third world villagers with solar ovens, transferring the results of biotechnology without charging patent and user fees, encouraging contraception, and promoting education for girls and women; but he offers every reason to think they will not be carried out. Last year, President Bush sabotaged the Earth Summit in Rio, but the arrival of the environmentally minded Gore and Clinton in Washington may not, Kennedy writes, mean a change for the better:

> Ironically, this time around, we could see Washington more willing to assist poorer countries while many of the other OECD countries drag their feet. With the ruling parties of Japan and Italy in a state of collapse and the governments of Germany, France, Britain, Canada, and many others experiencing record levels of unpopularity, they are probably incapable at present of implementing generous, far-sighted policies to aid our global ills. But if little or nothing is done, won't we and our children all pay a far higher price for that neglect in the future?


Paul Kennedy

That last anxious question sets the tone of the book. Another striking feature of Paul Kennedy's account of our global plight does much to explain the uncertain note he strikes. Kennedy writes of the policies that "we" ought to adopt, but he knows that we are not one but many, not united but divided. When we look to the high price we are going to pay for inaction, we know that some of us stand to pay a higher price than others, some of us face far worse problems with far fewer material and social resources than others of us, and solidarity between the better off and the worse off is in short supply. Talk of "our future" suggests a common fate and common incentives to grapple with that fate, but ours is in fact a world of social, cultural, ethnic, racial, economic, religious, and political division.

Many societies, Kennedy argues, will have a much worse time than the prosperous few after the year 2000—Somalia, Ethiopia, China, India, the former Soviet Union, much of Latin America, and many Arab states will have great difficulty in dealing with the population growth, environmental degradation, political dissension, and an unfavorable position in the world division of labor. Kennedy gives a convincing account of all this,[2] adding to a great deal of commentary along similar lines. What we are more anxious to know is whether more favorably placed societies—the United States, Japan, the member states of the European Community, and the other advanced European economies—can take control of global change in the next decade. And that is the question Professor Kennedy does not answer.

I say this uncomplainingly. It is an achievement even for Kennedy to raise the question as an urgent one when the United States, the European Community, and Japan are so largely preoccupied with their own internal affairs—the US with its industrial competitiveness, financial stability, and ability to provide its citizens with health care, the EC with the indigestion consequent upon instituting the "single market" in the middle of a prolonged recession and hard on the heels of German reunification, and Japan with averting financial and commercial meltdown.

Not everyone will be impressed by such difficulties. Environmentalists interested only in global issues may still find Professor Kennedy too distracted by these domestic concerns. His discussion of the problems facing the US, in particular, is a continuation of the discussion of "imperial overstretch" from *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* rather than the question whether America's world leadership in military matters can be refashioned for other purposes. Kennedy has added to the plot some somber reflections on the self-destructive qualities of American culture, but the question his chapter "The American Dilemma" raises is "Can Americans be saved from themselves?" rather than "Can Americans save humanity?"

American readers who objected to Kennedy's implication that the US faces decline in *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* might even think that Professor Kennedy wants to show that the US will remain "Number One" as the creator of environmental hazards—with 5 percent of the world's population, we emit 18 percent of the world's "greenhouse gases." They may claim that Professor Kennedy is not interested in what the US can contribute to their solution; but that would be unfair. Rather, he finds it as hard as anyone else to visualize just what stimulus it will take to make the developed countries act together to preserve the global human habitat while helping growth in the underdeveloped world.

Nobody doubts that the US will find it particularly hard to lead such a movement. American politics are driven by the efforts of particular interests and regions to frustrate national goals and policies; it is hard to imagine legislators who have prospered under such a system changing their ways and adopting a national, let alone a global perspective. Western senators have just forced President Clinton to withdraw plans to charge market rents and royalties on public grazing lands and mineral claims. These would have done even more for the environment than for the deficit. Can we imagine them voting for energy taxes for the benefit of foreign countries? American politics may not remain gridlocked until global warming has turned Kansas into a desert and put New Jersey under the Atlantic, but how and on what provocation we might turn from being the world's supplier of military hardware to being the supplier of environmentally delicate technology is a speculative question.

Preparing for the Twenty-first Century begins with the nightmare that has plagued the sociologically minded for the past two centuries, the problem of overpopulation. The Reverend Thomas Malthus stalks *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* much as he stalked the imagination of nineteenth-century economists. Malthus was famous for the claim that population grows geometrically, while the means of subsistence grow only arithmetically; while the food supply grows from two to four to six thousand bushels of corn, the population will grow from two to four to eight thousand mouths, and while we add the next two thousand bushels of corn we shall also add eight thousand more mouths.

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[1] *Financial Times*, March 27–28, 1993, pp. 1, 8.

[2] Much of it nicely summarized in his "Preparing for the Twenty-first Century: Winners and Losers," *The New York Review*, February 11, 1993.

Kennedy takes surprisingly seriously what is by now acknowledged to be a mere figure of speech. Malthus's precision was spurious. He had no basis for his calculations, and wrote his *Essay on the Principles of Population* (1798) to attack William Godwin. Godwin promised a world where property would be abolished and good sense would make us so invulnerable to the hazards of everyday life that we would live for ever and think about better things than breeding. Malthus gave a mathematical turn to a polemical point: in essence, that the sexual drive was too strong for restraint of the sort Godwin had in mind. Population was checked by "war, misery and vice"—"vice" meant birth control, and "misery" meant famine.

Kennedy looks at the history of nineteenth-century Britain, not, as many demographers have, as a refutation of Malthus—the British population rose from rather less than 10 million in 1800 to about 41 million in 1900, but output rose fourteen-fold and life expectancy doubled—but as something to be reconciled with Malthus. Kennedy finds the reconciliation in the migration of 20 million people from the British Isles to relatively uninhabited places like the United States, and in the exploitation of cheap food supplies from the American and Canadian prairies. The implication for ourselves is obvious. While Britain could export its surplus population to the US, Canada, and Australia, the countries that today suffer excessive population growth can do nothing of the sort; airlifting food to Somalia is one thing, but opening the US or Europe to hungry Somalis is quite another.

Nor is there a source of food like that which the British drew on in the nineteenth century. The developing world seems to have got what benefit it can from the "green revolution" of the 1970s, and to be suffering diminishing returns. India has salination problems in the heavily irrigated areas, and almost universally output of both cereals and other food crops has since 1984 suffered from "overuse of fertilizers..., attacks by new diseases, the deterioration of soil quality, and the fact that there was less suitable land available for further planting."

Population may seem to threaten trouble only to the developing countries that are experiencing explosive growth without a corresponding increase in food supplies, clean water, or employment opportunities. This would be a naive view. The surplus population of one country, as Kennedy points out, becomes the refugee or illegal immigrant problem of another. In this population growth resembles the second of the global challenges that Kennedy concentrates on: environmental degradation, represented most acutely by the potential problem of global warming. Kennedy says sobering things about other hazards, too—the ozone layer and radiation damage from the sun, for instance; and he laments the way the destruction of the rain forest and other tropical environments deprives us of animal and plant species whose potential usefulness in breeding disease resistant crops or aiding nonchemical pest control we can guess at from past successes but cannot intelligently estimate in advance. But the physical damage and economic disruption threatened by global warming certainly seem to him to pose the greatest dangers.

The third convulsion is not environmental; it affects our economic, educational, and industrial systems rather than the physical environment. This is the robotics revolution, hyperindustrialization at the expense of the human work force. Taking a leaf out of Robert Reich's book, Kennedy argues that the global division of labor now means that "symbolic analysts"—designers, stockbrokers, lawyers, and people whose talent is generally for devising solutions to problems—form a global elite whose incomes, work, and life styles are increasingly unlike those of the semiskilled and unskilled worker. How societies will deal with unemployment, inequality, and sheer misery in the face of rapid occupational change is a large question. The process has an agricultural twin: if the only way to secure enough edible protein to feed all the new mouths will be "bio-tech" factory farming, traditional ways of life that have been built around an old agricultural technology will also be threatened, and it is not only French farmers who deeply resent such changes.

This is a mere sketch of the book; the text is a dense forest of statistical and more broadly sociological evidence drawn from the developed, the developing, and the struggling world. It can give the most hardened info-addict a hangover, as Taiwanese democracy jostles for attention with the Japanese passion for hierarchy and the mixed results of the Indian green revolution. *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* is best read slowly and several times; but if your idea of intellectual pleasure is a long tutorial with the entire staff of the *Economist*—and mine is—Kennedy provides a fine diet of mind-boggling information and impossible questions.

He has two targets. The larger is the possibility of mastering the ecological and technological changes already under way, and accelerating the "demographic transition"—the demographers' term for the way countries pass through a period of rapid population growth as their mortality rate drops and their birth rate doesn't to an eventual condition in which they fail to or just barely keep up their numbers. This would be true of the US except for immigration, and is already true of Japan, Germany, and much of Eastern Europe. And he sees that this raises the question: Who is to take our future in hand—Who is to do the taking and whose future is to be taken in hand?

Do we mean, "How is India to persuade the inhabitants of the United States to put less carbon into the atmosphere so that the considerably poorer people of India can continue to pour the carbon-rich smoke of their wood fires into the atmosphere, and develop their industries with as little regard to the environment as the Americans did before them?" Or do we mean, "How

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WOMEN’S WORDS

can the rich, already industrialized countries make the developing world develop less casually and less destructively than it did, while paying as little as possible of the cost of taking the cleaner and less destructive road?”

The first question evidently amounts to a grim joke, and the second raises a possibility that is increasingly seen to be repulsive. But what process of international negotiation and aid will match the needs we confront remains, in Kennedy’s book, anyone’s guess. If there is a legitimate complaint to be leveled at Kennedy it is that he says too little about the possible effectiveness of international institutions in dealing with these matters, and has no clear view of the utility of such conferences as the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio as a way of getting international consensus on global environmental policies.

His second subject is one he is wholly at ease with—what is known to the political science trade as “regime capacity,” the ability of the political and other institutions of a given society to deal with the problems that beset it. The second half—the last two thirds—of *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* is an inventory of regime capacity. Japan unsurprisingly appears to be well equipped to survive whatever history throws at it. As to population problems, Japan is in no immediate difficulty; population growth is low, and the belated entry of women into the educated work force will lower it further—as will the generally cramped condition of urban life in Japan, and the cost of housing as opposed to other items of consumption. The aging of the population poses some problems, but if any society can afford to support large numbers of elderly citizens, it will be Japan.

In matters of industrial change, Japan is equally well placed; the robotics revolution is a Japanese revolution. It is the labor shortage in Japan that explains why robotic production has been developed there to a degree that astonishes other countries. And if Japan wants to preserve its high-price rice farmers as a sort of cultural luxury, there seems nothing to prevent that either. But Japan can do little to escape the global consequences of environmental degradation. Kennedy almost reduces the question to a vivid example of the risk that the island of Okinotorishima will vanish under water, and thus diminish Japan’s fisheries; “it has already allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to shore up and protect the tiny outlying island . . . ; if it should be permanently submerged under the rising seas, Japan could lose fishery and seabed rights.” He knows better. Japan cannot export to a world in collapse, and it is not clear that the Japanese economy could readily adapt to a world where its export markets shrank dramatically. In that sense at least, Japan is no more able than anywhere else to opt out of global environmental disaster.

China and India, on the other hand, have a hard path. Chinese industrial development has so polluted the environment that there are cities satellites can see on only a handful of days a year. Chinese fertility has been held to 2.4 children per woman—a steady state rate is 2.1—but even so, there will be 1.5 billion Chinese by the year 2025, and their potential impact on their habitat boggles the imagination. China also faces a version of “damned if they do and damned if they don’t.” Holding down the birth rate may be essential in a country that “can sustain between 750 and 950 million people—figures surpassed some two to three decades ago.” Success in this, however, threatens to unbalance the population, so that by 2035 there would be twice as many sixty-year-olds as twenty-year-olds, with obvious consequences for the economy.

India, on the other hand, threatens to become swamped by its population. With a fertility rate of 4.3, India stands to have as large a population as China in 2025, of whom more than half will live in poverty. Both industry and agriculture grow too slowly to do much to pull the really poor out of their misery, and the process of industrialization has barely limped along: in 1978–1979, 15.8 percent of national output came from industry, by 1989, it had crept up to 16.1 percent.

The most discussed chapters of *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* will surely be those on which Professor Kennedy’s two recent contributions to *The New York Review* were based. Regional specialists will no doubt quibble with some of the details of his discussion of “winners and losers in the developing world,” but the general direction of his argument is hard to resist and deeply alarming. He opens with one of many disturbing statistics: “Nothing better illustrates the growing differences among developing countries than the fact that in the 1960s, South Korea had a per capita GNP exactly the same as Ghana’s ($230) whereas today it is ten to twelve times more prosperous.” The outlines of success and failure are familiar; the Asian “tigers”—Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Korea—will prosper, with low population growth, a highly educated and adept working population, and governments apparently competent to administer a modern market economy, while most of Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East will be riven by ethnic strife, governmental ineptitude, and military conflict.

What is less familiar is the attention Kennedy pays to the cultural factors that have allowed some societies to make the transition to a modern market economy, sustained by a population whose attitudes and ambitions support it rather than fight it. He sets most store by what President Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore used to boast of, the Confucian emphasis on education; and he is respectful of the way that “the uniformity of the system does not exclude an intense individual competitiveness; in Taiwan (where, incidentally, twelve members of the fourteen member-cabinet of 1989 have acquired Ph.D.s abroad), only the top third of each year’s 110,000 students taking the national university entrance examinations are selected, to emphasize the importance of college education.” This helps only in the right environment, but factors like the high level of national savings, government support of business, the direction of effort toward exports, and the attempt to catch up with the Japanese leader seem to be not unlikely companions of intelligent farsightedness directed toward communal rather than purely private ends.

The contrast with large parts of Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa is too painful to dwell on for long. Another appalling statistic, borrowed from the *Wall Street Journal* is enough: "excluding South Africa, the nations of sub-Saharan Africa with their 450 million people have a total GDP less than that of Belgium's 11 million people."

Nor does Kennedy suggest how Egypt will manage to support a population growing from 55 million today to 94 million by 2025, while simultaneously holding the Muslim Brotherhood in check, persuading Ethiopia and the Sudan not to interfere with water supplies from the Nile, and coping with the unexpected impact of the Aswan Dam on the fertility of the soil its waters irrigate. American readers, for their part, are likely to ask whether the US will emerge among the winners.

Adam Smith observed that "there is a great deal of ruin in a nation." Britain's decline from global economic leadership to its current standing somewhere at the head of the second class states took a century or so. The US has been losing ground in growth and productivity to just about every other industrialized nation since the end of World War II, but the average productivity of American workers is still the highest in the world. Moreover, if we correct for the distortions of exchange rates, only Switzerland has a higher real income per head. Yet this is an eroding lead; the US economy was almost five times as large as Japan's in 1970, and less than twice as large in 1987, some 12 percent larger than the entire EC in 1970 and barely two thirds the size in 1987. If it grows at half the speed of these economies for thirty years, the consequences are clear.

Kennedy's conclusions will further provoke American readers who resent his "declinism." He thinks the US is like Britain a century ago, a rich, liberal, decentralized society in which no consensus can be established about the need for a national policy for renewal, and where too many vested interests in education, the professions, industry, and government are sufficiently content with the status quo to lack any interest in devising such a policy. The British "muddled through," and that is what he expects the US to do. The results will not be intolerable, but they will be *relative* decline.

Or rather, they would not be intolerable if American public culture were such that Americans got good value from what they spend their money on. Kennedy belongs to the social-democratic school of thought that believes the real problem with the US is a blind attachment to a self-defeating economic individualism. American moral and political individualism based on a variety of rights remains as attractive as ever for Kennedy, but American disorganization thoroughly irritates him. Among all the citizens of advanced countries, only Americans would spend 14 percent of GNP on a health care nonsystem that leaves thirty-seven million people uncovered; only Americans would think it sinful to raise taxes to pay for an efficient public transport system, or to induce motorists to save fuel, or to provide free higher education for all who qualify for it.

The American system of law and order reduces Kennedy to something close to indignant splutter: the most livable American city—Seattle—has a murder rate seven times higher than that of one of Britain's least livable cities—Birmingham. The US incarcerates 426 persons per 100,000 population; the Soviet Union managed half that, the Australians a sixth, and the Dutch a tenth. This masks a larger evil yet; black Americans are jailed at the rate of three thousand per hundred thousand, "whereas South Africa managed to preserve apartheid by imprisoning 729 black males per 100,000." The failings of American secondary education, the disintegration of the nuclear family, and the horrors of the inner city are too familiar to bear repeating.

The picture of cultural rot given by Kennedy has much in common with some recent gloomy figures released by William Bennett and the conservative Heritage Foundation.[3] But Kennedy points out that the end of the cold war has meant that such reflections do not come from one particular point on the ideological spectrum. Some Democrats who support Clinton, like Ben Wattenberg, are joined in cheerfulness about the future with friends of William Bennett, like George Gilder; and on the other side of the divide, many of President Clinton's academic advisers come from the pessimistic end of the spectrum. They are as afraid as Bennett is of the collapse of the two-parent family, the dissolution of educational standards, and the weakening of the moral inhibitions against crime.

In the situation Kennedy describes, the prospects of the US taking a decisive lead in helping the rest of the world to face an uncertain future are not good. Coping with everything from global warming to the shift of political power and social and cultural influence away from the white European Northeast toward the browner South and West while remaining deeply attached to creaking institutions set in place in the late eighteenth century will take all the energy the US possesses. Optimists will say, quite rightly, that Professor Kennedy is guilty of unsophisticated extrapolation—that he takes present trends and tells us how ghastly things will be if they continue; but they never do continue. Vast changes such as the collapse of the Soviet Union can take place without anyone predicting them. The development of cheap and pollution-free energy from nuclear fusion could upset projections about the costs of development. To which pessimists will respond that things are as likely to change for the worse as for the better. Professor Kennedy is careful not to come down too boldly for one side or the other, but *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century* seems to present on the whole a case for pessimists. ☐

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[3] *The Wall Street Journal*, March 15, 1993, quoting "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators" put out by Empower America, The Heritage Foundation, and Free Congress Foundation.

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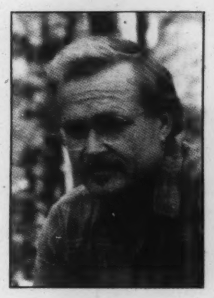

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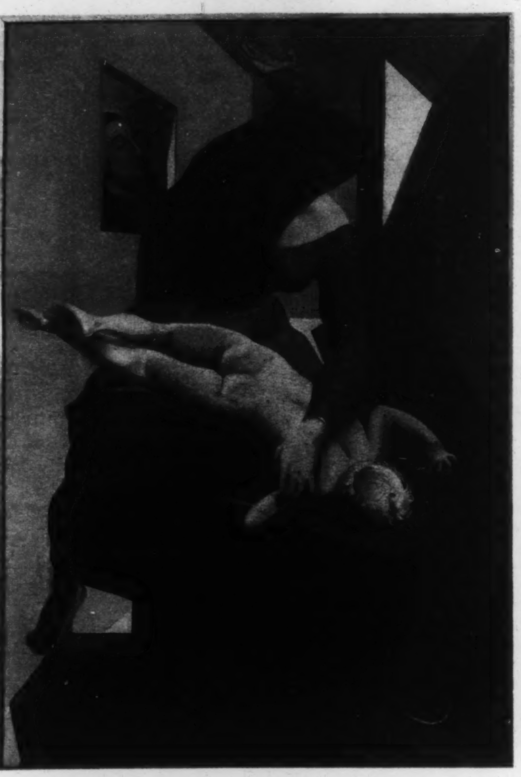
Leo Steinberg

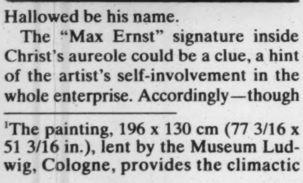


Max Ernst: The Blessed Virgin Chastising the Child Jesus Before Three Witnesses: A.B. *[André Breton],* P.E. *[Paul Eluard],* and the artist, *1926*

A Virgin Mary earnestly spanking her son is hard to imagine and theologically absurd, somewhat like Santa Claus engaging in child abuse, or Uncle Sam desecrating the flag. Since Jesus cannot have misbehaved, and Mary cannot chastise unjustly, a picture of the subject, especially one over-life-size, pretending to real presence, is intrinsically impossible. And if we find such a picture in the current Max Ernst exhibition at MOMA,[1] then we are either hallucinating or thinking heresy and consenting to blasphemy, whereas we should be alerting the Holy Office and the police.

The duplicity of Ernst's picture encourages no such simple reflex. For one thing, the kind of domestic disturbance Ernst has invented ought to proceed in the intimacy of the home, indoors, as in Dutch genre painting. The boy's imputed delinquency should be corrected in private. Yet this immense, glassy-eyed giantess sits like a monument between free-standing walls under an open sky, straddling a public space. And she sits (quite like Michelangelo's *Medici Madonna*) on an upright block placed on a plinth. Could it be that we are shown not a woman but an effigy in weird animation, a statue forgetting itself because it thinks there is no one to see? Hardly. Since 1926, when this outrage first broke on a scandalized public, the ontological status of the punishing mother has never been questioned.

So then it's the holy Virgin herself caught in a hitherto unpublicized moment. With her naked boy (who seems to be about five years old) sprawled on her lap, she flails at his blushing buttocks, while his halo rolls free, and the painter signs its diameter.



Hallowed be his name.

The "Max Ernst" signature inside Christ's aureole could be a clue, a hint of the artist's self-involvement in the whole enterprise. Accordingly—though the subject, Ernst said, had been proposed to him by André Breton—recent writers on the picture have chosen the psychoanalytic approach, hoping to discover the motive for it among the artist's own primal traumas and Oedipal fantasies. One studies the artist's biography, his notebooks, his confessional doodles—anything that will permit one to disregard the picture itself and, as we shall see, one's insinuated complicity in it.

Who, in fact, is watching the action? The title tells us, but in a way that seems slyly misleading. Ernst called the picture *The Blessed Virgin Chastising the Child Jesus Before Three Witnesses: A.B.* [André Breton], *P.E.* [Paul Eluard], *and the Artist.* On this cue, being summoned as witnesses, the three men behind the rear wall should be paying attention. So the 1986 catalog of the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, which owns the painting, speaks of "the witnesses to this unholy act, who look in on the foreground scene through a rear window."[2] A distinguished historian has them obligingly "looking through the window at an unusual scene"[3]—as befits the role assigned to them by the title. But that's clearly wrong, and the catalog to the present show (the relevant passage written by Walter Hopps, p. 158) takes a long step in the direction of accuracy by setting the artist apart: "Of the three, only the gaze of Ernst focuses directly on the event transpiring." But is it the foreground event that the keen-eyed painter is looking at? Try again.

A square aperture in the rear wall reveals the three "witness" faces, foremost the profiles of Breton and Eluard. And they, unlike you and me, ignore the spectacle with surreal disdain, spurning the privilege to which the picture's title entitles them. The startling contrast between their indifference and our gawking is what defines us. How you and I, away from the picture, actually feel about it is irrelevant, because extraneous to the encounter. The point is that the depicted "witnesses" display a coolness which we, as we stand there and stare, and by virtue of staring, are rendered incapable of. The very attention we bring to the scene is shamed into prurience by the proffered alternative, the insouciance of the two poets.

Behind them looms the full face of the painter—too remotely recessed and too oddly angled by the obliquity of the wall to see what he knows us to be seeing. From his distant vantage, the window contracts to a slot, and the divine comedy in the foreground, for want of a periscope, is out of his sight. Yet his eyes are wide open and their fixed glance is on us, on me, measuring my reaction. This is a test.

The painting is engineered to embarrass: so long as I look, I am exposed to the artist's accusing gaze as he watches the churl in me trapped in the act of ogling a sacrilege—a provocation which my betters scorn to acknowledge.

It's a cruel jest and a no-win situation all around—for Jesus, his mater, and us voyeurs. Unless we fly to aestheticism to restore self-respect. Though the draftsmanship seems a bit lax here and there, it's not a bad painting. ☐

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[1] The painting, 196 x 130 cm (77 3/16 x 51 3/16 in.), lent by the Museum Ludwig, Cologne, provides the climactic big bang to the exhibition "Max Ernst: Dada and the Dawn of Surrealism" at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 14–May 2; The Menil Collection, Houston, May 28–August 29; The Art Institute of Chicago, September 15–November 30, 1993. Exhibition and catalog are the work of the Menil Collection.

[2] Evelyn Weiss, in *Museum Ludwig Köln: Bestandskatalog* (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 1986), p. 68.

[3] Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages" (1986), in her collection *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Zone Books, 1992), p. 79.

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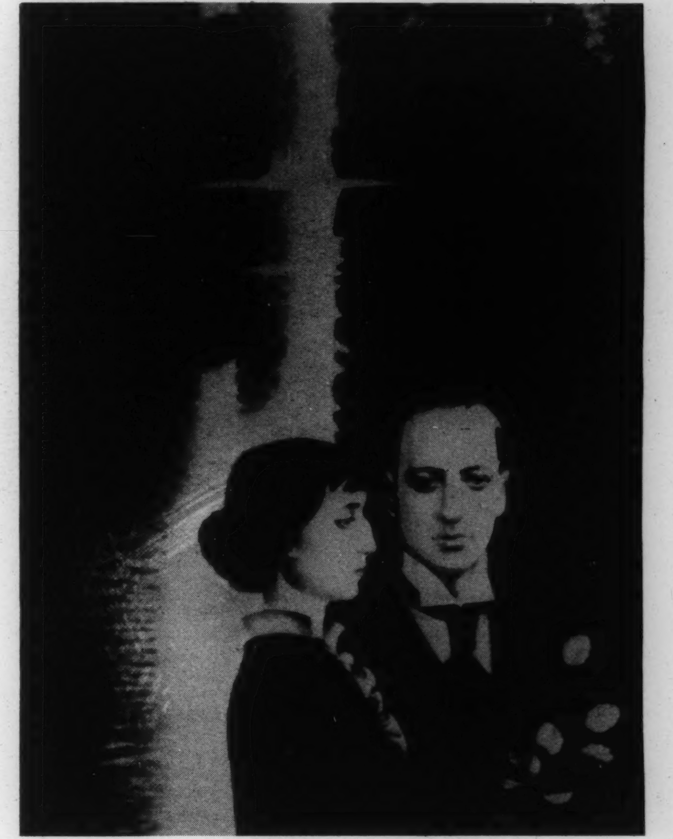
Poetry must somehow proclaim its authority. However mysteriously this comes about, its achievement can always be recognized; a great poem continues to assert its magisterial spell in the face of all the tyranny or indifference of passing events. When Yeats wrote in 1919, "The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity," he could not have known that before the end of the century, at a time when convictions of any sort were hard to come by, for both the good and the bad, his words would nonetheless have passed into the language, been stamped on the consciousness of daily speech.

How much more has this authority come to exist in the great poetry of Russia, where it stamped its conviction on the secret speech of the martyrs and the persecuted? A moving photograph in the complete edition of Anna Akhmatova's poems, between the text and the notes, shows a tiny handmade "notebook," formed of a few fragments of paper stitched together, with a poem of hers laboriously copied out in minute handwriting. This had been the treasured possession of a *zek* in one of the gulags, a talisman to strengthen him through years of suffering. Now that particular tyranny has gone, at least for the moment, and poetry of course remains; yet its authority in Russia is perhaps not quite what it was, its "bright name"—in Aleksandr Blok's phrase—not quite so potent. A famous sonnet of Shakespeare's has never enjoyed a moment of such rough magic as when the audience at a hall in Moscow shouted insistently for "Number 66," while Pasternak, with grudging permission from the Soviet authorities, was reading his translations. That sonnet contains the line: "And art made tongue-tied by authority," and goes on to speak of "captive good attending captain ill."

Of course art can always be used for propaganda purposes, and bad art too can sometimes enjoy in a political context the same potency as the good. But since the time of Pushkin Russian poetry at its best and most venerated has never achieved its force and its popularity by going directly against the state and the establishment. On the contrary: its power has always come from its detachment, its serene confidence in belonging, so to speak, to another and a better world. Not in every case is this true. Nekrasov, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, and in conformity in some degree with the famous critic Belinsky's theory of the social utility of art, is both an excellent poet and a propagandist for social and political reform. For that reason he was one of the few poets, other than the iconic Pushkin, to be thoroughly approved of by the Soviet authorities, who also encouraged another good poet, Mayakovsky, to be their poetic mascot and front man with the Muse. Unable to stand the strain of serving two masters, Mayakovsky committed suicide. Blok, who had earlier shown a wish to serve as a poet the new Bolshevik society, had already died in despair. His well-known poem "The Twelve," for all its undoubted magnificence and impact, in fact falls resoundingly between two stools: it is a poem of wholly personal and symbolic vision which nonetheless tries to be realistic and urgent about historic events and the Reds' seizure of power.



Anna Akhmatova and Nikolai Gumilev, *artist and date unknown*

This point against Blok's vision of twelve uncouth Red Guardsmen wandering destructively through St. Petersburg under the leadership of Jesus Christ was made by Pasternak in *Doctor Zhivago*, which contrasts the grim reality of "Russia's terrible years" with Blok's poetically apocalyptic conception of them. Akhmatova, who did not at all care for Blok as a man although she admired some of his poetry, would certainly have agreed with Pasternak's view of the matter. For her, as for Pasternak, the poet indeed had a duty, but it was nothing to do with political principles, or with a regime. It was to stay where you were, in your own country, and write, as a poet, for your own people. For Russian poets to leave Russia and go into emigration was for them to forfeit the mysterious authority which they possessed. It is this knowledge and certainty which fill the four lines at the opening of Akhmatova's tragic poem-cycle *Requiem*, written in memory of the time under the Great Terror when she stood outside the prison in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) where her son was confined, hoping, like innumerable others, to get a parcel through, or at least a word.

No, not under the vault of alien skies,
And not under the shelter of alien wings—
I was with my people then,
There, where my people, unfortunately, were.

That is Judith Hemschemeyer's translation, and her versions of Akhmatova's collected poems in the new single-volume Zephyr Press edition—it succeeds the bulky two-volume edition with Russian text and translation on facing pages published three years ago—is in general excellent: accurate, unpretentious, and in the same straightforward and simple key as the original. The usual difficulties and impossibilities remain of course; but Akhmatova was herself a translator, and like all the Russian Acmeist poets she was steeped in the texture and tradition of European and English poetry. She knew the difficulties, and would appreciate how the translator, who learned Russian because of her love for this poetry, has tried to overcome them.

Wendy Rosslyn gives the usual and more elegant version of that stanza's last line "Where my luckless people chanced to be" in her translation of Anatoly Nayman's sensitive and lively memoir of the poet. It is true that the drawback of the word "unfortunately" in English is that it is usually employed in a trivial context—"Unfortunately, she's got another appointment" or something of the sort. "Luckless" is a more obvious poetical word, more rare, more drastic. But it is just because of its commonplaceness that "unfortunately" seems to me to be right in this dire context: the Russian *k neschastiu* is not poetical either. According to Nayman, Akhmatova herself used to get impatient with worshipers of *Requiem*, and its tribute to the "blood and tears" of suffering humanity, pointing out that these are poems, and remain poems. She nonetheless singled out those four lines as the "one good passage," evidently separating the absolutely basic emotion in them from all the artifices of good poetry.

There is a difference, and a vital one, between the inevitable distance of any poetry from what is actually going on, and the deliberate cultivation of a "poetic world" by a Symbolist poet like Blok. Pushkin and Akhmatova are not in the least concerned to be "relevant" to human affairs and responsibilities—sometimes they are and sometimes they aren't—their poetry is in this sense quite unselfconscious, and therefore wholly separate and wholly individual. But it is equally natural that their poetry speaks with its own complete authority, not an assumed or a carefully constructed one.

In this context Nayman makes an unexpected and devastating point. "Strictly speaking, *Requiem* is the ideal embodiment of *Soviet poetry* that all the theorists describe." Its hero is the people, the *narod*, not the people as the regime wanted them to be, and was continually and hypocritically invoking, but the people as they actually were. By upbringing and temperament, and no doubt by conviction too, Akhmatova was instinctively a Christian. So was Pasternak. That is why they had to stay where they were. Not only their instinctive authority as poets depended on it, but their identification with Russia—its past and especially its faith. The great advantage of such a faith against all forms of political idealism, an advantage which would be comical if the human predicament did not make it so inherently tragical, is that it has no trouble in accepting things as they are. Politics and ideology always have to pretend that things could be different, and, in Soviet Russia, that they actually *were* different. Hence the fact that Soviet poetry, so far from identifying like Akhmatova with what was really going on, had no choice but to endorse the Big Lie and to identify with the *narod* as it was ideally supposed to be, not as it was.

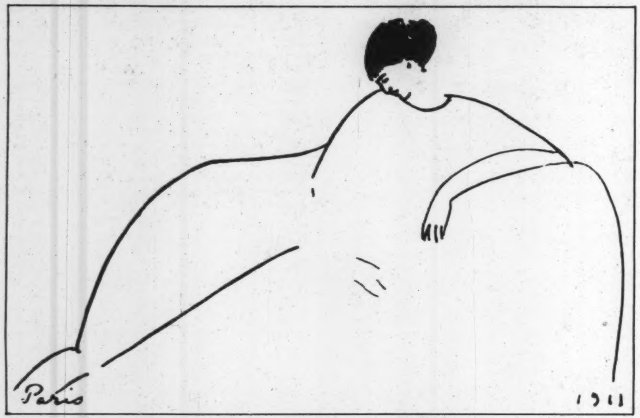
Having said that it is necessary also to state—and Nayman too makes this clear—that Akhmatova, like many other poets of her time (like Yeats himself) could seem a tremendous show-off. Her fellow-poet Marina Tsvetaeva used sardonically to refer to her as "Anna of All the Russias." She was regal; she was a queen. Yet she was one absolutely by nature, as if a little girl, a giddy princess, had always known what grave responsibilities ineluctably awaited her, and met them when the moment came without protest or pretension. The showing off was done on her behalf by friends, critics, the hangers-on—devoted or merely sycophantic—which literature attracts, and particularly literature in the Soviet Union, with all the official flim-flam—poets' villages and "Houses of Creativity"—which sought to make the people venerate the chosen bards of the Soviet system as much as the system itself. Ironically all that state-culture worship was transferred by a sort of honorable reversal on the part of their devotees to Pasternak and to Akhmatova herself. They became rival icons to those of the Soviet regime, images of an older and truer faith.

The splendidly refreshing thing about Nayman's memoir—he is himself a poet and was her literary secretary in her old age, when even the post-Stalinist regime did not dare to persecute her more—is that although he reveres Akhmatova as a woman and a great poet his tales about her, and his sparkling critical intelligence about the background and setting of her poems, are not in the least reverential. He assumes her grandeur and her dignity as she assumed them herself; and his accounts of her life in Leningrad, in her small crumbling room on the Fontanka canal and later outside the town in the writers' village of Komarovo, have the homely fascination and humor of Boswell's recollections of Dr. Johnson. When Robert Frost came to Leningrad in the late Fifties a meeting was arranged by a well-known critic and authority on English literature. "Both their names figured in the list of candidates for the Nobel Prize, and the idea of bringing them together seemed an especially felicitous one to the bureaucrats..." The Eng. Lit. man was duly impressed—"how grand she was, and how sad she seemed," when she read Frost her poem "The Last Rose." "For some moments we were silent, still."

But Akhmatova later told Nayman with amusement that she had felt like a "Grandma" with a "Grandpa," and moreover that Frost had seriously wanted to know whether it might be profitable to manufacture pencils using the Komarovo pine trees. Entering into the spirit of the thing, she reminded him that anyone felling a tree in the park was fined 500 rubles; but the reader may suspect that Frost was acting the New England farmer, teasing her in his deadpan way and being more playful than either she or her secretary realized. She felt it unfitting and improper for a great poet to have such a "farming streak" in him. In fact two quite different attitudes to Art and the Artist—the Russian one and the American—were misunderstanding each other.

St. Petersburg, as it was in her youth and is now again after the Soviet years of being Leningrad, was at once Akhmatova's court and the kingdom of her poetry. She had been born Anna Gorenko, in far-off Kiev in the Ukraine, but her father being a naval architect the family had moved to the Baltic about the time in 1905 when the Japanese were sinking the Russian fleet at Tsushima. Her mother and father separated, and the family settled at Tsarskoe Selo—"Tsar's Village"—just outside St. Petersburg. She was already being courted by the promising young poet Nikolai Gumilev, who was to fight gallantly as an officer in the 1914 war and to be shot by the Bolsheviks for alleged monarchist conspiracy in 1921. Anna Gorenko was reluctant to marry him, but in the end she did, and they had a son, Lev, mostly looked after as a child by Anna's mother-in-law. Under the Soviet regime he was to be twice imprisoned for long periods for no other reason than that he bore his father's name. The anguish of his arrest and detention with innumerable other victims of the Terror in the Kresty Prison in Leningrad is the subject of Akhmatova's somber and magnificent *Requiem*.

When she showed signs of being a poet her father begged her not to dishonor the family name by using it in this frivolous context, so she called herself after a Tartar ancestor on her mother's side; the name is cognate with the oriental *Achmet*. Her husband, a difficult, moody man who disliked the routines of domesticity and only cared for "old maps and distant countries," thought it would be ridiculous for one poet to be married to another. Certainly this rare conjunction is not often a success, as was shown in the more recent case of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes; yet it is possible for one to inspire the other even as the marital relation deteriorates. Gumilev was a generous man who soon saw that his wife had real talent. On his return from travels in Abyssinia he asked her what she had been writing, and she showed him poems that had been inspired by another Russian poet to whose work he had introduced her. Innokenty Annensky was a withdrawn, scholarly man, who taught classics at the school of Tsarskoe Selo and who had produced a short book of poems called *The Cypress Box*. This had become her Bible, rather as the youthful Pushkin was never without his copy of the poems of the Frenchman Parny.



Anna Akhmatova, ink drawing by Modigliani

Gumilev congratulated her warmly on her new poems, and they were a great success when published in the spring of 1912 as her first collection, *Evening*. Her second collection, mostly of love poems, *Rosary*, made even more of a sensation two years later: she became something of a cult figure in the Petersburg literary world. By then her husband had formed round them the circle of poets known as Acmeists or Adamists, of whom Osip Mandelstam was one. Their poetic philosophy was in a sense existential: a precision about things and moments, and a rejection of symbolism and the Ivory Tower.

From the sad majesty of *Requiem* Akhmatova was to look back on herself at this period as the "gay little sinner of Tsarskoe Selo." The events of those years—love affairs, separations, tragedies like the suicide of a young cadet, the lover of her friend Olga Sudeikina—were all to find their way into her strange masterpiece of poetic autobiography, *Poem Without a Hero*, which she wrote in the terrible years before and after the Second World War. Like *The Waste Land* it possesses the mysterious authority, that of Pushkin's *tainstvenni pevets*—the secret-bearing poet—to convey the apocalypse of a whole epoch in the words of a single intimacy. Its uniquely sonorous rhythm, which can only be very imperfectly suggested in English, brings into a liturgical unison past and future, the figures who haunt the threshold of the new century, "the real and not the calendar one," which began for her in 1914, and visitants of quite another kind, doubles from an endless masquerade.

> *Since childhood I have feared maskers;*
> *It always seemed to me*
> *That some superfluous shadow*
> *With "neither face nor name"*
> *Slipped in among them...*

One of those who slipped into the poem as if by accident was also for her a predestined visitor.

> *The guest from the future!—Is it true*
> *That he really will come to me,*
> *Turning left at the bridge?*

The visitor was Isaiah Berlin, an Oxford professor working in 1945 at the British Embassy, who came to her room over the bridge by the Fontanka canal. His wonderful account of the visit forms one of the introductory pieces to the *Complete Poems*, in which he imparts his sense of reverence and awe at meeting in these circumstances a poet who had become so tranquilly and effortlessly, and as if by natural ordination, a queen, even a goddess: one whose survival and secret life in silence and exile were known only to a few. A letter to Nayman observed that a friend had found an epigraph for her poetry.

> *But I stand on calamity's scaffold*
> *As if enthroned 'midst the courtiers' homage.*

And she accepted the homage without either modesty or vanity.

This matter-of-fact acceptance of herself as a vessel of divinity, one chosen to utter mysteries so vital to the human spirit, is often expressed in her poems ("They flow across the blank page / Like a pure stream in a ravine") and in her sense of her intense relation with unknown readers and listeners. Pasternak had the same kind of conviction of himself as poet-savior and redeemer, as in *Doctor Zhivago* and poems like "Gethsemane," but Pasternak did not have her sense of humor and her female down-to-earthness. Clearly she inspired a sense of fun in others, as well as reverence. Comedy was part of the magic.

Isaiah Berlin describes how he met her and was settling down for what turned out to be an all-night conversation, when they were disturbed by his name being shouted in the courtyard below.

It proved to be Randolph Churchill, the son of Winston, who was also on a visit to the British Embassy, and who when looking for Berlin and finding himself in surroundings that reminded him of his old Oxford college, had started hallooing for his colleague as he would once have done in the quad. This was at the beginning of the cold war, and Russian friends and well-wishers were stupefied by the risk and the possible scandal involved. Here clearly—in the eyes of the KGB—were two English spies come to conspire with the great Russian poet, and perhaps even whisk her away to London! The absurdity probably had no ill effects, but it was about this time that the literary establishment resolved once more to denounce Akhmatova for nonfulfillment of the Soviet poetic ideal, while her son was sent into a second term of exile.

Earnest pilgrims from abroad were later to be embarrassed by the squalor in which the distinguished old lady was compelled to live. Nayman recalls a young English university don who was working on the "folk sources" in her poetry. Akhmatova had a drawing of herself by Modigliani over the bed in her small room, and it was suggested he might like to look at it, but the invitation seemed to bother him. Later she said to her secretary with a laugh, "Over there they're not accustomed to seeing old ladies' beds. He looked dreadful when you dragged him to the edge of the abyss. They can't believe that we live like this. Nor can they understand how we write at all in these conditions." The husband of her old friend Punin's daughter, in whose flat she was living (Punin himself had died in a gulag), was a trial to her because of the way he attempted as "a devotee of beauty" to hold literary conversations. When Akhmatova with her secretary and the poet Brodsky was celebrating with some cognac the tenth anniversary of Stalin's death the husband appeared and began to ask her whether "one should not underestimate Voznesensky and Surkov"—both well-known poets during the Soviet regime. Akhmatova maintained a stony silence, but afterward remarked with a laugh about her literary landlord, "I value him highly. In his stead we might have a person who would admonish me with 'Mother, you've left the bathroom light on again.'"

Vivaciously translated, Nayman's memoir makes an ideal companion piece to the wealth of essays and photographs in the volume of collected poems, as it does to Amanda Haight's already classic biography of the poet.* Judith Hemschemeyer and her editor Roberta Reeder have done a superb job, and the latter has been able to include in this translation several poems and fragments discovered in Russia by the scholar M. M. Kralin, and authenticated by Nayman's knowledge of the poet in her last years. Shortly before she died she wrote a couple of final lines:

> *Necessity herself has finally submitted.*
> *And has stepped pensively aside.*

The delphic utterance might seem to link with that world of shadowy personifications, maskers, and memories in *Poem Without a Hero*, where the poet dryly observed, "There is no death—everyone knows that, / It's insipid to repeat it," taking as her sign the motto of Mary Queen of Scots—"In my end is my beginning"—which she had found in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

In another poem she comments, "Without mystery there is no poetry," and she called one series "Secrets of the Craft." Susan Amert takes a further phrase of hers, "In a Shattered Mirror," as the title of an exceptionally learned and elegant study of the technicalities of Akhmatovan poetry, doing the job without any of the contemporary jargon and high-flown theory which the poet herself would have despised. For Akhmatova always maintained there was nothing upstage or recherché in what she wrote, none of the invented world of symbolism. Her mystery, like Pushkin's, was in clarity: in an openness which could appear baffling because it left so much unsaid. Her husband had long before remarked on this, and on the fact that as a poet she did not "invent herself": the point was later elaborated in a study of her poetics by the well-known critic V. Vinogradov.

Susan Amert begins her own book by making a comparison between the early fame of Pushkin and his "Byronic" poems, and the similar success enjoyed by Akhmatova's first two collections. It is a good point, because even Pushkin's friends were baffled by what they considered the homely oddity of his later masterpieces, like *The Little House at Kolomna* and *The Bronze Horseman*, while his enemies claimed he had ceased to be a poet. Though Akhmatova never lost her popularity her devotees were puzzled by the cryptic internal references in *Poem Without a Hero*, while the Soviet literary establishment scurrilously referred to her as the "nun and harlot" whose decadent and frivolous verses were unworthy of the good name of Russian poetry.

Certainly *Poem Without a Hero* is a gift to the critic and commentator, and Susan Amert's chapter on it is illuminating. As with *The Bronze Horseman* this great *poema*'s authority makes its own kind of sense, and has its own impact on the individual reader. Akhmatova herself was a profound Pushkinist, and wrote some fine and subtle essays on his later poetry. Her tastes in the literature of her own country could be sharply arbitrary. She abominated Chekhov: Nayman thinks it was because his "gray" world reminded her too much of her own drab early days at Kiev as Anna Gorenko, before she became the Princess of Tsarskoe Selo. She was not keen on Tolstoy but adored Dostoevsky and reread him continually. She had an almost girlish attachment to Byron's poems; and Isaiah Berlin was a bit bewildered and embarrassed when at the beginning of their long colloquy together she recited to him from memory two cantos of *Don Juan*, in an English stressed so oddly that he could barely recognize it as such.

As her translator emphasizes, "Akhmatova lived in a home constructed not only of Russian literature but world literature." For the Acmeist movement of the early days, as Mandelstam had put it, universal culture was what mattered. And just as Pushkin's poetry seems to resolve itself in the end into a celestial form of fairy tale, coming at once from everywhere and nowhere, so Akhmatova's poems have the same clear, unwondering, unlocalized matter-of-factness about them. She was always sardonic about herself, and impersonally maternal about her creations. Sometimes she saw the muse as a wicked stepmother, drinking her blood "like that evil girl of my youth—love." There was nothing obviously "feminine" about her or her poems, and yet many of the most striking ones show an oblique but profound identity with female impulse—Cleopatra summoning her pride to suicide, Lot's wife giving her life for the sake of a last look back.

She was right also to stress that there was nothing hermeneutic about her poetry, nothing resembling the verbal mysteries of Mallarmé: her mysteries are in the open, as they are in legends. A famous early poem, "The Gray-Eyed King," later set to music by Prokofiev, is an inverted fairy story, with all that form's suggestive intensity, but full of the conviction—so somber in the later postrevolution poems—that magic does not work, that there is no happy ending. Only in the completion of a poem. The gray-eyed king is dead: the peasant mother looks into the eyes of the child she has secretly had by him. □

Anna Akhmatova: A Poetic Pilgrimage (Oxford University Press, 1976).

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Burdick Gallery 2114 R Street NW, Washington DC (in the DuPont Circle Gallery District), (202) 986-5682, Tues-Sat, 11-5, and by appointment. *Inuit (Eskimo) Sculpture and Prints* from the Canadian Arctic; *Northwest Coast Indian Prints.*

Terry Dintenfass Gallery 50 West 57th Street, NYC, 581-2268. *John Keane: The Struggle for Control of the Television Station* and *Frances Hynes: Scenes from Life/Layers of Time*, reception 4/27, 5-7 pm, both shows through 5/21. Opening 5/27 are *Robert Andrew Parker: Etchings of Four Decades*, reception 5/27, 5-7:30 pm, and *Gallery Collection.*

First Street Gallery 560 Broadway, Room 402, NYC, 226-9127. *Maureen Mullarkey: Gender in the Crucible*, paintings and drawings exploring images originating in urban gay culture, in which the artist identifies a neo-medievalization of contemporary life--a theatre of permanent tension, apocalyptic currents, new faiths and perspectives, culminating in the Gay Pride parade. Through May 15.

Forum Gallery 745 Fifth Avenue, NYC, 355-4545. *Interiors and Exteriors*, two concurrent exhibitions. *Interiors* will feature paintings by Christian Vincent in his first New York exhibition. *Exteriors* will include landscapes by Gallery artists including Robert Bauer, William Beckman, and Gregory Gillespie, through 5/29. Opening 6/4 is *Raymond Han: New Still Life Paintings*, through 7/2. Also exhibiting at Art Chicago, Merchandise Mart ExpoCenter, 350 North Orleans Street, Chicago, 5/6-10.

Frumkin/Adams Gallery 50 West 57th Street, NYC, 757-6655. Tues-Fri, 10-6, Sat, 10-5:30. *Jack Beal*, a mini-retrospective for this prominent realist painter, surveying work from 1963 to the present, in honor of the publication of a monograph on his work by Hudson Hills Press. Through May 12. Opening May 15 is *Arnaldo Roche: New Paintings*, the artist's first exhibition since his show in Mexico earlier this year at The Monterrey Museum.

IBM Gallery of Science and Art Madison Avenue at 56th Street, NYC, 745-6100, Tues-Sat, 11-6. *Two Lives: Georgia O'Keefe and Alfred Stieglitz* pairs the paintings of O'Keefe with the photography of Stieglitz, tracking the visible and intellectual correspondences in their work. It is the first time since 1924 that their work has been exhibited together. Also showing is *Master European Paintings from the National Gallery of Ireland: Mantegna to Goya*, which features some 44 Old Master paintings, including works by Titian, Ruisdal, David and Velazquez. Both exhibitions run through 6/26.

Sidney Janis Gallery 110 West 57th Street, NYC, 586-0110. Mon-Sat, 10-5:30. New environmental works in black or white by GEORGE SEGAL. *Street Crossing*, 1992, one of the artist's most fluid, large-scale works, invites the viewer to walk into and through the sculpture's space, mixing with the random movements of the white plaster figures. Segal's other works, by contrast, present a single figure in a highly personal black environment: *Early Morning: Woman Lying on a Bed*, 1993, and *Man in a Doorway*, 1992, are each painted in a variety of luminous and matte blacks. Rothko once called an early Segal "a walk-in Hopper," and these late sculptures also reflect the artist's captivation with Rembrandt etchings. Illustrated catalogue with text by Carroll Janis. Through 5/15.

Matthew Marks Gallery 1018 Madison Avenue, NYC, 861-9455. *Brice Marden: New Paintings, Drawings and Etchings*, 5/5 through 6.26.

Pierpont Morgan Library 29 East 36th Street, NYC, 685-0008. Tues-Sat, 10:30-5, Sun, 1-5. *Pursuit to the End: Ulysses S. Grant as Strategist* through 6/13; *The Observant Eye: Henry James, 1843-1916*, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the author's birth with a selection from the Library's collection of manuscripts, letters and first editions, through 8/15; *A Great Legacy*, illuminated manuscripts, printed books, autograph manuscripts and other objects collected by J.P. Morgan, Jr, through 8/15; *Treasures from the Permanent Collections.*

The National Academy of Sciences 2101 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC, Mon-Fri, 9-5. *Frank Bowling: Selected Paintings, 1980-92.* Through 5/23. Please contact Emanuel Silberstein at the Georgetown Gallery, (203) 333-6308, for information.

The Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum 32-37 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, (718) 204-7088, Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6, April through November. The Museum, bordering on Manhattan's East River, houses over 300 works by the world-reknowned sculptor. On display are sculptures of stone, metal, wood and clay as well as the "Akari" light sculptures and documentation of his gardens, playgrounds, fountains and stage sets. Opened in 1985, the Museum is comprised of 12 galleries, an outdoor sculpture garden, and a viewing room showing videos on Noguchi's work and is unique in that it was designed by the artist himself. On Saturdays and Sundays, a shuttle-bus service from the Asia Society at Park Avenue and 70th Street in Manhattan will leave every hour on the half hour from 11:30 to 3:30 and will return on the hour until 5. Roundtrip fare is $5.00.

Stephen Rosenberg Gallery 115 Wooster Street, NYC, 10012. Tues-Sat, 11-6 pm. *Michael Mulhern: New Paintings* through 5/15. *The Tenth Summer*, a revolving group exhibition celebrating the gallery's tenth season featuring work by Ballard, Braes, Brosk, Cuppaidge, Keller, Kuszek, Pinette, Seidl, Strautmanis, Thorne, Waid and others. Through 7/31.

Luise Ross Gallery 50 West 57th Street, NYC, 307-0400. *Lonnie Holley*, the first solo NYC exhibition for this self-taught artist, features assemblages made from such disparate objects as metal wire, bones, fabric and tin and sandstone blocks, screwdriver-sculpted into Egyptian-North American Indian-African totemic figures and heads. The works are an extension of the ideas and philosophies embodied in his extraordinary multi-media environment in Alabama, the artist's backyard. Opening reception 4/27, 5-7 pm, through 5/28.

School of Visual Arts 209 East 23rd Street, NYC, 679-7350. *Fine Arts & Photography Exhibition* at the Visual Arts Gallery, 137 Wooster Street, curated by Jack Whitten and Alice Beck-Odette, 5/13 through 5/29, reception 5/18, 5-7; *Annual "Dusty" Awards*, Cineplex Odeon at 50th Street and 8th Avenue, 5/17 at 6pm.

Anita Shapolsky Gallery 99 Spring Street, NYC, 334-9755, Wed-Sat, 11-6, Tuesday by appointment. Abstract and figurative paintings by seven prominent *Latin American Artists--Perez Celis, Victor Chab, Jose Luis Cuevas, Agustin Fernandez, Omar Rayo, Fernando deSzyszlo, Mario Toral.*

Shepherd Gallery 21 East 84th Street, NYC, 861-4050. *Annual Spring Exhibition of New Acquisitions: Nineteenth Century European Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture* through 6/5.

Swann Galleries 104 East 25th Street, NYC, 254-4710. **AUCTIONS:** 5/13: *Shelf Sale*; 5/20: *19th Century Literature, Sets & Bindings, Miniature Books*; 5/27: *Works of Art on Paper*; 6/10: *Maps, Atlases, Decorative Graphics*; 6/17: *Sporting Books*; 6/24: *Hebraica and Judaica.* Please write or call for preview hours, catalogues with Absentee Bid Forms, and quarterly newsletter.

The Nowhere City

Amos Elon

1.

In daytime, the main avenues of Kaliningrad—wide enough to allow ten tanks abreast to pass a reviewing stand—are half deserted. Traffic is sparse. Before the Russians took it over in 1945, this ice-free Baltic seaport was the ancient German city of Königsberg, the historic capital of East Prussia and one of the more attractive towns of the German empire. Recently there has even been talk of Germany taking the city back. But now the barren monotony and inhuman scale of Communist urban planning make Kaliningrad—the phantom of a city without any visible center—possibly one of the ugliest places in the world. Four hundred thousand inhabitants—70 percent transient sailors, fishermen, and members of the Russian armed forces and their dependents—live here in monotonous apartment blocks, crumbling mountain-ranges of tar and cement and peeling plaster, gray on gray.

The public squares, as in most cities built by the Soviets after the war, are vast, each large enough to accommodate almost the entire population. Loudspeakers left over from the old Communist public-address system still dangle from their poles. There are no mass rallies nowadays and the loudspeakers are rarely if ever used. But the statue of M. I. Kalinin, a former president of the Soviet Union (he is said to have sent his own wife to the Gulag), is still standing in a vast square outside the railroad station. The city was named for him in 1945 after its capture by the Red Army in fierce street fighting with the Wehrmacht and its annexation by the Soviet Union. A giant statue of Lenin is also still standing on Ploshchad Pobedy (Victory Square)—the former Adolf-Hitler-Platz.

Founded in 1255 by knights of the Teutonic Order on rising ground above the river Pregel (now called Pregolya), Königsberg was the seat of a famous Lutheran university. In the countryside nearby were some of the largest and finest estates of the Prussian military aristocracy. In this quintessentially Germanic region the proverbial Prussian virtues of duty and discipline and austere living were cultivated in huts and manor houses, while in the city itself the dukes and the kings of Prussia were crowned. Immanuel Kant was born here in 1724, and he hardly ever left. At the university he taught not only philosophy, but geography and math as well. Johann Gottfried Herder, a Lutheran minister's son who also taught here, almost single-handedly invented pan-German nationalism as the expression of the "spirit" of language and folksong and poetry.

Königsberg was an important garrison town, where generations of Prussian officers were trained in blind, ungrudging obedience to the word of command. Yet among young graduates of its military academy were also some of the spirited, if ineffective, aristocratic officers who conspired to launch the coup against Hitler's tyranny on July 20, 1944.

Photograph © Ulrike Preuss/Impact Visuals

Kaliningrad: the boy is holding a picture of the city when it was called Königsberg

Driving through today's city, you would never guess how pretty Königsberg was. Old photographs show a scenic place, with a busy harbor, several fine churches, picturesque wharfs, and stately embankments and promenades along the river. On the hilltop stood the Prussian royal palace with its imposing crenelated towers. In the middle of the river was a densely built-up island whose narrow lanes, lined with medieval frame houses, led to the great brick Gothic cathedral in which the Prussian kings were crowned. Its grotesque ruin survives today in the middle of the completely empty island, with Kant's relatively well-preserved tombstone on the wall of the southwestern corner.

Nearly everything else has disappeared. When the Red Army stormed it in 1945, roughly a third of the old town was still standing and there were 120,000 remaining Germans. By 1947, the last of these had been deported to Germany or Kazakhstan, along with neighboring East Prussian farmers, many of whom died. Stalin ordered the old center of Prussian militarism bulldozed, leveled, and completely rebuilt as a model socialist city, to be resettled by Russians, Lithuanians, Georgians, Ukrainians, and other New Soviet Men and Women. Not all came voluntarily. Some were inmates of gulags ordered to settle in Kaliningrad after years of forced labor in the nearby swamps. The population today is still some twenty percent below its prewar level of 480,000.

The future of the Kaliningrad Province, or Oblast, one of Russia's thirty-nine increasingly autonomous provinces, is currently a matter of intense debate. The sudden collapse of the Soviet empire made Kaliningrad the last bit of territory (a mere 4,200 square miles) left over from Stalin's vast territorial gains in Eastern Europe during the Second World War. But Kaliningrad is now cut off from "mainland" Russia, to which it formally belongs, by hundreds of miles of newly independent Lithuanian, Latvian, and Belarus territory. (See map on opposite page.)

Only a few of the people I saw believe Kaliningrad should go on being governed directly by Moscow. They talk of Kaliningrad becoming an "independent" Baltic state, of "full autonomy" as a new "Republic of Prussia" within the Russian federation, of a joint German-Russian condominium, or of outright *Anschluss* with Germany. Like the officials of several other Russian regional governments, the local administrators here have become more independent of Moscow in recent months, and some are now actively courting virtually every prominent German businessman, journalist, or missionary who visits the city.

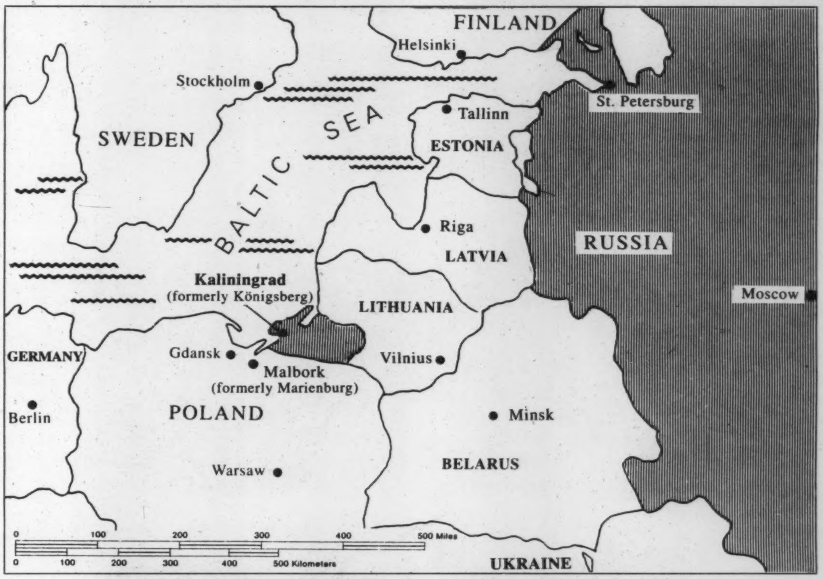
"Kaliningrad must become Königsberg again," I was told by Arsenij Gulyga, a prominent Russian philosopher who is now the leading Russian authority on Kant. Gulyga recalls with some irony that as a young Soviet officer in 1945, he had been one of the "liberators" of the city. Now, he says, "it would be the most natural thing in the world" if the city would revert to Germany again. Geographically, it is nearer to Berlin (400 miles) than to St. Petersburg (512 miles) or Moscow (more than 600 miles). Historically, it remains a German city, he says. Gulyga would also like to see the tsarist monarchy restored.

There is a persistent rumor in Kaliningrad, as well as in the Baltic countries, that an East Prussian "government in exile" has already been formed by right-wing German politicians. At the same time nationalists in both Warsaw and Vilnius are laying claim to parts of the Kaliningrad Autonomous Province, which they consider "historically" Polish or Lithuanian. In Warsaw last summer I saw leaflets calling for the return of Kaliningrad (Krolewiec) to Mother Poland; a few weeks later, in Vilnius, people were referring to the eastern parts of the Kaliningrad region as "Little Lithuania." The Lithuanian ambassador to Washington provoked a minor storm last year when he announced that Little Lithuania was an empty space and could be taken over by his country immediately.

Several people I talked to speculated that Russia might sell the former Königsberg to the Germans for money—a temptation which the Moscow English-language weekly *New Times* described last year as possibly "too strong to resist." According to one view of German politics, past and present—which by now may be a misleading stereotype—"Prussia" and "Königsberg" are central or permanent features of the German national psyche. "Can Kohl really refuse a Russian offer to restore Königsberg?" a Polish diplomat in Warsaw asked me. He may be overestimating Germany's wealth after reunification or the true extent of its economic or strategic designs in the East. President Yeltsin is thought to be sufficiently unconventional, and hard-pressed for Western currency, to entertain the idea of a sale for which there is a well-known precedent—the Russian sale of Alaska to the United States in 1872.

On the other hand, if Germany should reacquire East Prussia and Königsberg this might undermine the entire postwar border pattern in Eastern Europe and revive fears of German expansionism. "Poland will strongly oppose it," a Polish diplomat says. According to a joke circulating last summer, pessimists in Kaliningrad are taking lessons in Polish and optimists lessons in German, while realists are learning how to shoot Kalashnikov submachine guns. (In fact, nearly 75 percent of the students at the state university have signed up for German courses.)

The city's economy is in a state of collapse. The average monthly pay went down from sixteen dollars a month last summer to an estimated nine dollars a month now, and a Russian army major makes only slightly more than twice that amount. On the Lenin Prospect I saw soldiers in uniform selling gasoline from an army petrol tank to civilian motorists. There is a thriving black market in military equipment. Western diplomats claim that in Kaliningrad you can buy yourself a missile ("there are more missiles here than trees") or a tank, if you so wish, and perhaps even nuclear fuel or a nuclear device. A Western diplomat told me that dozens of nuclear devices formerly located in the Kaliningrad area remain unaccounted for.



Kaliningrad: still part of Russia although separated from it by hundreds of miles

The port's nuclear submarines have been transferred to the Arctic Sea or decommissioned, but there are many rumors—most of them ugly ones—about the condition and safety of these decommissioned nuclear submarines, and of the shore-based reactors that used to produce their fuel. The total amount of radioactive materials in them is said to be many times greater than that in the crippled unit at Chernobyl. In the Russian press there have been warnings of the danger of "dozens of Chernobyls" erupting in Russian naval bases in the Arctic and Baltic seas. One morning I visited Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, the officer commanding the Russian Baltic fleet, in his office on the outskirts of Kaliningrad. I asked if there was substance in these warnings. Or was the press perhaps exaggerating? "The situation is even more serious than as reported in the press," the admiral replied.

Early each morning, thousands line up outside the state-owned food shops where the shelves are often bare. There are long lines for the bus, which sometimes never arrives and often has no room for more passengers when it does. Lines of a different sort form every morning at some of the main intersections: hundreds of elderly woman and men, mostly state pensioners, stand about for hours with a little something in their hands they are hoping to sell: a bottle of Coke, a jar of preserved cucumbers, a handful of berries, a wilted cauliflower wrapped in a piece of torn newspaper.

Almost every night graves are dug up and robbed by thieves who come to the cemeteries with metal detectors, looking for rings and other valuables and for gold teeth which they pry off with hammers and pliers. The police seem to do nothing to prevent this. I visited the Kaliningrad police chief, Colonel Viktor Shoshnikov, in his office. A tough-looking man, with a habit of quoting Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn, he was sitting behind a large oak desk—before 1945 it may have served a German police chief—on which were many telephones. Keys dangled from his broad belt.

Shoshnikov began by lamenting that the crime rate in Kaliningrad had risen sharply since the beginning of glasnost and perestroika. Perestroika and the "Americanization of journalism" were inspiring permissiveness, pornography, prostitution, and capital crimes. The entire Kaliningrad region, he said, was infested by "a plague of Smerdyakovs," referring to the feeble-minded, sinister half brother of the Karamazovs. People had never been afraid to go out at night, Shoshnikov said. Now they are.

At night, the streets are dim. Nearly all electric power is imported from neighboring Lithuania, which is threatening to charge hard currency for it soon. In the bluish uncertain light cast by neon and quartz street lamps, many of them damaged, the few souls still about throw weird shadows on the ground, and the atmosphere, grim and gloomy at best in daytime, is now even gloomier. On Prospekt Mira, outside the rickety old Hotel Moskwa where I was staying, drunks were hollering in the dark long after midnight. I watched them stagger over the potholes in the road, throwing bottles against the walls and shouting obscenities at one another. Drug addicts passed the night on the scraggly lawn nearby. According to a recent report in the liberal local newsweekly *Mirror*, a former samizdat publication, Kaliningrad is the "No. 1 drug city" in the former Soviet Union. When I asked Colonel Shoshnikov about that he said that Kaliningrad is number one on the list only because it is the only major city reporting true statistics; all the others were cheating.

One cannot escape an uncanny feeling of the existence of the old Königsberg, like the negative of a damaged photograph, lying ten to twenty feet underneath the city's surface, covered with rubble from the war and from Stalin's bulldozers. If the huge mass of debris were cleared away the old topography, now flattened out, would come into view, with its natural hills and dips, its landscaped river basins and embankments. Buried under the Lumumba and Friedrich Engels Sport Centers, under the Gamal Abdul Nasser Park and Oktober Revolution Housing Estates Nos. 1–9, the old town has survived only in the city's historical museum, where models of the 1945 street battles accompanied by sound effects convey an idea of the burning city's center, drowned in gunfire, at the moment of its capture by the Red Army.

Until the spring of 1991, Kaliningrad was a Soviet "security zone," known as the "Silent Swamp," since it was very difficult to visit and few people knew what was going on in the many military installations there. The region was closed to foreigners, except possibly spies, and even to most Russians except by special permit. Much of the rich farmland—before the war East Prussia was Germany's corn granary—lay fallow. Some three hundred abandoned German villages that had engaged in farming before the war were never resettled. During the early Sixties, oil was found east of the city but it was hardly developed. Nor was Kaliningrad's economic potential exploited, with its opportune geographic location at the westernmost point of the Soviet Union and its great port, as a link between Russia and Central Europe. Instead, the place was turned into one of the Soviet Union's main military and naval bases.

According to a report published last spring in *Moscow News*, if war with the West had broken out, the main task of the Soviet Baltic fleet would have been to capture the Danish Straits and seal off the Baltic Sea. Between 1945 and 1991, no Western cargo ship was allowed into either Kaliningrad waters or those of nearby Baltijsk (the former Prussian Pillau). The city is still a military fiefdom, headquarters of the 11th Army of the Guards, and seat of the admiral commanding the Russian Baltic fleet. The Baltic fleet, according to Admiral Yegorov, is expected nowadays to cover part of its maintenance costs by transporting civilian and foreign cargo and renting out ships to Western entrepreneurs and organizers of entertainments such as company anniversaries or wedding parties.

Throughout the city and its environs, the traffic on the streets is largely military. In the countryside, one drives past parked tanks and camouflaged installations behind seemingly endless barbed-wire fences. Since the withdrawal of Russian troops from Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states, there is an even greater military presence. According to one Western estimate, close to a quarter million troops are now stationed here. All this, according to a Western diplomat in Warsaw, may reflect not only the difficulties of absorbing the army into Russia, but the extent of the Russians' self-consciousness and unease in this arch-Germanic spot.

Poland and the Soviet Union have treated the former German territories they took over after 1945 very differently. Many historic German cities in those territories suffered severe damage during the war. In the parts of Prussia (and Silesia) that fell under Polish rule (and from which some six million Germans were expelled) the Poles made a conscious effort to absorb the German past. Claiming that in these "regained Polish historical lands" Polish burghers and peasants had always been the majority, the Poles managed to make that past over into their own. Very carefully, even lovingly, and at great cost, they restored and in some cases rebuilt from scratch famous ancient German universities and Lutheran domed churches (they are now Catholic), castles, guildhouses, town halls, and Hanseatic burghers' mansions. The effort at rebuilding German ruins as Polish national monuments has been going on for decades; by now, the brand new Gothic or Baroque buildings have acquired their own patina and look genuine and old. Even that great symbol of German military colonialism in the East, the palatial castle of the Grand Masters of the Order of Teutonic Knights at Malbork (the former Marienburg) in East Prussia, has been restored as a major Polish historical landmark.[1]

The Russians, apparently for ideological reasons, including their hostility to religion, and perhaps also from a sense of insecurity that the Poles did not share, systematically effaced nearly every remaining trace of German art and history in Kaliningrad. Churches, in particular, were the object of Soviet distaste. The Lutheran Kreuzkirche, which had survived the war almost intact, served until recently as a factory for smoked fish. The main Catholic church in the city was converted into a concert hall. Other churches were blown up or dismantled. In the outskirts, an old city gate was left standing, the scene of long-forgotten skirmishes with the Swedes during the Seven Years' War, last restored under "the gracious reign" of Wilhelm II in 1889, according to a still legible plaque on the wall; 1889, incidentally, was the year Hitler was born. A few medieval forts have also survived, as have some of the stately German villas in the suburbs, which are now occupied by high-ranking Russian army officers and members of the old Communist elite. With few exceptions, the major public monuments, including Kant's statue, were melted down.

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[1] Until 1918 the castle was one of the Kaiser's official residences. Wilhelm II is said to have stayed in it more than fifty times. In an often quoted speech he delivered there on May 5, 1902, he referred to the Marienburg as Germany's "old bastion in the East...a monument that testifies to Germany's task [there]: Once again Polish insolence offends Germany and I am constrained to call upon the nation to safeguard its national inheritance." Quoted in *Der Letzte Kaiser*, catalog of an exhibition at the Historical Museum, Berlin (Berlin: Bertelsmann Lexikon Verlag, 1991), p. 314.

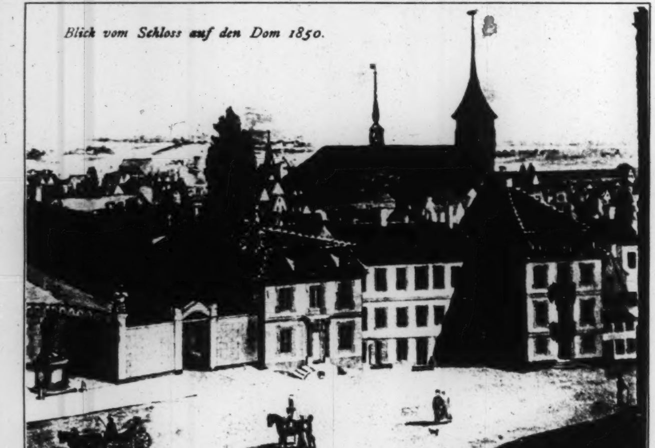
In one case, a Prussian grand elector's headless torso was turned into a Russian monument by sticking Field Marshal Kutuzov's head on it; it can now be seen in the Oktober Revolution Quarter. Extensive remains of the former royal palace were still standing in 1969, and, according to Yuri Zabuga, a local architect, it could and should have been restored. Instead, it was bulldozed away. The bleak skeleton of a projected House of the Soviets has stood in its place unfinished for the past fifteen years, a monstrous eyesore twenty-two stories high, visible from nearly everywhere in the city. No trace is left of the many stone fountains that were still more or less intact after the war. "If I were dropped in this town by parachute, and asked where I was I would answer: perhaps in Irkutsk," wrote Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, publisher of Hamburg's liberal weekly *Die Zeit*, in 1989, on her first visit since 1945. She had grown up on an estate a few miles outside Königsberg. "Nothing, absolutely nothing, reminds you of the old Königsberg. At no point could I have said, this was once the *Paradeplatz* [where Kant's old university stood], or here stood the *Schloss*. It is as though a picture has been painted over; no one knows that underneath there had once been a different scene."

2.

In the former Paradeplatz, now an open space of cement blocks and tarred walks and a few dusty trees, I followed a group of German tourists down a flight of stairs into an underground bunker, now preserved as a war museum, where the last German commander of "Festung (fortress) Königsberg" capitulated to the Russians on April 9, 1945. Maps, photographs, and a diorama with toy soldiers and flickering lights recall the fierce fighting in the burning streets and the heavy casualties on both sides. A photocopy of the capitulation agreement is on view, and it stipulates, among other things, that each German officer is allowed to take into captivity as many suitcases as he and his servant are able to carry.

The German tourists spent a few minutes in the bunker and soon climbed back up to take their seats on their bus. A few young boys crowded the exit outside and shyly tugged at their sleeves. They pulled from their shabby coat pockets little German medallions and other souvenirs dug up in the rubble, old silver spoons, combs, coins, military buttons, and rank insignia they were hoping to sell. There was also an elderly, one-armed Russian, who was offering Red Army battle medals, his own, he claimed, at thirty-five deutsche marks each. He had won one at Kiev, he said, and another in April 1945, outside Berlin.

The Hotel Moskwa, where I was staying, was a crumbling old hostel with dusty curtains and threadbare carpets on wooden floorboards that creaked underfoot. The seedy little rooms came with small radio loudspeakers screwed to the wall which could only be turned louder or softer, never completely off, and were wired to receive only one local station that endlessly repeated the hit tunes of a local rock group named American Boys. In the long corridors, the stale air smelled of cigarette butts and cleaning fluid. On the walls were photographs of Kant's tomb and of the beaches at the nearby Baltic resorts of Zelednogradsk (the former Bad Crenz) and Svetlogorsk (Rauschen), where Thomas Mann is said to have vacationed in the Twenties and where high-ranking Russian naval officers now have their summer houses.


Blick vom Schloss auf den Dom 1850.

Königsberg, 1850

One day, coming out of my room on the second floor of the hotel, which was reserved for foreigners, I encountered an elderly German tourist from West Berlin who called out "*Guten Morgen*" and then told me in an assured tone that the Hotel Moskwa had been a German office building before the war, the headquarters of a big insurance company named Continental. This he knew for certain, he said. He himself was a Berliner but his wife was a native of Königsberg and knew the city. We walked down the stairs together and in a more casual tone he added that there was no doubt, no doubt whatsoever, that Königsberg would soon be German again. "It is in the stars," he said. "And in the books. As De Gaulle put it, everything in the world changes, except geography." The Russians themselves must be conscious of this, he said. "They can't really believe it possible for the city of Immanuel Kant to be a Russian city. It is an absurdity."

"It's happened before," I suggested. In the eighteenth century, after the Seven Years' War, when Königsberg fell briefly to the Russians, Kant himself and the entire university faculty voluntarily took an oath of allegiance to the "Illustrious and All Powerful Empress of All Russians, Elisabeth Petrovna etc etc" and to her heir, the future Peter III. I had just read that in a newly available English translation of Arsenij Gulyga's biography of Kant. He replied: "That doesn't count. The wars of the eighteenth century never affected ordinary people. And there was no nationalism then."

In Germany, in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in Prussia and Prussianism. The bones of Frederick the Great, which had been evacuated by the Nazis to West Germany to escape falling into Russian hands, were carried back to Potsdam in 1993 and, in the presence of Chancellor Kohl, ceremoniously reinterred next to the Emperor's greyhounds in the park of Sans Souci. Prussia continues to haunt the German imagination. It figures in all sorts of German myths, good and bad. The Prussian tradition of public service—the plotters against Hitler had been Prussian noblemen—is pitted against Prussian worship of discipline and authoritarianism. A powerful West German lobby advances the right of former Prussians to repossess the old *Heimat*, or at the very least, be compensated for lost property. The revival of interest in Prussia, highlighted recently also by three unusually extravagant exhibitions in Berlin—on Prussia in Europe, on Bismarck the Iron Chancellor, and on the last Kaiser, Wilhelm II—has been interpreted as possibly reflecting a revival of nationalism in Germany, especially since reunification.

In Kaliningrad I was told that since the city was opened to outsiders in 1991, some forty thousand German visitors had passed through, many of them former residents of Königsberg or members of former Königsberg families who wanted to see their Prussian homeland. The traffic was increasing all the time and was known in the trade as *Heimwehtourismus*—homesickness-tourism. To help German visitors find their way in the rebuilt city, a 1941 street plan, with its Herman-Goering-Strasse and Adolf-Hitler-Platz has recently been published, not by a German neo-Nazi but by an enterprising private printer in St. Petersburg.

When I joined a bus full of German tourists in Kaliningrad one morning, the Intourist guide on duty, a good-looking young woman borrowed for the day from the German department of Kaliningrad State University, systematically called out the names of old German streets—Hansaring, Steindamm, Junkerstrasse, Reichsplatz. Perhaps because the guide was so well informed, the tourists asked few questions. Like many young people in Kaliningrad today she referred to the city by its old name, Königsberg. She had never liked Kalinin anyway, she said. Kalinin had ordered that little children caught stealing a slice of bread be shot.

For many years, she said, talk about Kaliningrad's German past had been frowned upon. As recently as 1984, the Party newspaper would not publish an article, written by a colleague of hers, a philosopher, on the occasion of Kant's 260th birthday. She pointed resentfully into the empty air at long vanished landmarks. But, she said proudly, a number of concerned citizens of Kaliningrad had been successful in at least saving the ruined dome of the cathedral, even though Brezhnev himself, on a brief visit to the city in 1980, had given instructions to tear down the "rotten tooth."

During my stay I came to know some of the *Heimweh*-tourists who stayed at the hotel. They were fairly well-to-do people, most of them past retirement age. Self-conscious, even a little cowed, they wandered about the dilapidated city, complaining only of the smell everywhere of unclean lavatories and rotting food. Every morning around nine they walked out of the hotel in smart sports clothes, living advertisements for a free market economy, armed with the latest miniature video cameras and pocketfuls of deutsche marks in small change to hand out as tips as they went along. Shirtless little boys ran after them crying, "*Bitte, bitte! Eine Mark, Eine Mark, Bitte!*" They also toured the nearby countryside around Kaliningrad, which has changed the least. The roads, laid out long ago in seemingly endless straight lines by Prussian engineers, are lined with tall trees standing at exact intervals, like soldiers. Picturesque horse carts rattle on the old cobblestones and storks nest atop old telegraph poles. Flocks of white geese graze on the stubble fields. A woman from Düsseldorf said: "It's the world of yesterday. You don't see such sights any more in West Germany." The ancient trees that surrounded the noble estates outside the city still stand but the manor houses were burned down or have collapsed.

In Kaliningrad itself word has gotten around that the *Heimweh*-tourists are in no way anxious, as some local people had feared, to reclaim their former family houses that are now part of the squalid housing estates of Kaliningrad. Hence

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encounters between former and present day residents of Kaliningrad are often quite friendly and sometimes Germans and Russians get rather emotional. The Germans often come to visit their old houses with American cigarettes, six-packs of German beer, Würstel, cosmetics, and other small presents.

At the common breakfast table in the hotel the *Heimweh*-tourists discussed their experiences and impressions. They were hardly a cross-section of ordinary Germans. A middle-aged lawyer from Munich said he represented an organization called Union of Propertied Nobleman (Verband des Besitzenden Adels). But the same *Heimat*-polemics that one hears in Germany are also heard in Kaliningrad. When a man in his sixties, who said he had escaped from the small East Prussian town of Allenstein (today the Polish Olsztyn), complained of Russian barbarism, another man in the group told him not to forget that Hitler had been the principal reason for his loss and had, at the same time, condemned all of Eastern Europe to forty-five years of Communist tyranny. When a Berlin businessman said that *Realpolitik* made it imperative that Königsberg revert to Germany, a woman from Hanover, a retired school teacher, burst out: "*Realpolitik* is just a nasty German word meaning the domination of the weak by the strong."

The new self-assurance of some Germans after reunification and the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe was also evident. One man said: "In 1945 we left Königsberg totally defeated. Now we come back completely victorious. We'll just buy this place. How much do you think it'll cost us in real money?" A woman said: "We saw our house. It's in a terrible shape. The bathtub Father got shortly before the war is gone too." The businessman from Berlin was the most militant. I asked him why he was so insistent that the lost territories in the East be returned to Germany. Wasn't Germany a happier and more prosperous country nowadays than ever before in its history? "You don't need East Prussia," I said. He looked at me disdainfully. Then he said solemnly, as though reciting a well-known text: "Need is not a historical category."

A woman born in the Rhineland said that in 1941, as a six-year-old child, she had been evacuated to her aunt's house in Königsberg because Königsberg was safer from air raids than Düsseldorf. When the Russians came she escaped with her aunt over the half-frozen Mazurian lakes. Her aunt fell through the ice and drowned. She said that she had now visited several times with the people who now occupied her aunt's house. They felt "guilty" about living in someone else's house, she said, but they were soulful, emotional people, and she was sentimental too and got along well with them. "We agreed," she said, "that we are all losers." Her *Heimat* was elsewhere now.

But *Heimat* continues to be a charged term in the German language. Even so liberal a writer as Marion Gräfin Dönhoff, who has devoted a lifetime to fighting right-wing romantic nationalism and to promoting responsible democratic citizenship, has cherished *Heimat* in her own way. The Federal Republic, she wrote in 1970, was well worth supporting and defending because it is a free and open society "but it is not *Heimat*." After diplomatic relations were established between Germany and Poland, with the implied recognition of the new frontiers, Countess Dönhoff, the former proprietor and heiress of vast estates in East Prussia, wrote:

> Farewell to Prussia, then? No, for the spiritual Prussia must continue to be active in this era of materialist desires, otherwise this state which we call Federal Republic of Germany will not survive.

When she publicly proposed last year the establishment of a Polish-Lithuanian-Russian-German condominium in Kaliningrad, the members of the editorial board of *Die Zeit*—including the former chancellor Helmut Schmidt—vehemently protested and, after reporting this reaction herself, she has not repeated her proposal in print.

"We call ourselves Russians, but we are not really Russians," the Kaliningrad writer Yuri Ivanov told me. Ivanov is the author of several books on Kaliningrad and head of the apparently well-endowed Kaliningrad Cultural Foundation. He and an increasing number of Kaliningrad intellectuals would like to free the city from what they call its "historical unconsciousness." Ivanov was born in Leningrad in 1929. He survived the German siege and famine there and arrived in Kaliningrad in 1945 as a sixteen-year-old soldier in the Soviet army and never left. "How could we be Russians, living where we do? I have no friends in Russia. We were never Soviets either. The so-called Soviet Man was an illusion. Our roots here are only forty-five years deep. We live in a historic German city. Those who lived here before us are our countrymen." Still, he adds, "We are not Germans either. Perhaps we are Balts."

Nevertheless he felt closer, he said, to Germans than to the highly nationalistic Lithuanians and other Balts. And he did not like Marion Dönhoff's plan of a Polish-Lithuanian-Russian-German condominium in Kaliningrad. "Who needs the Lithuanians?" he exclaimed. "I fear them much more than I fear the Germans." He envied the Poles who had rebuilt Danzig in all its past splendor. "It could have been done here too... Kaliningrad ought to be an autonomous republic within the Russian federation. We must get rid of the name. Kalinin was an evil man," Ivanov said. "As in Leningrad, we must bring back the old name of the city—Königsberg. It's a historical necessity."

In the countryside, German missionaries wander from town to town with mobile altars and electric organs and gift parcels from Germany. One Sunday morning, as I was passing through Chernyakhovsk (the former Insterburg), a small town near the Lithuanian border, I happened upon a German Apostolic Church revivalist meeting. Outside the old German Rathhaus some three hundred people

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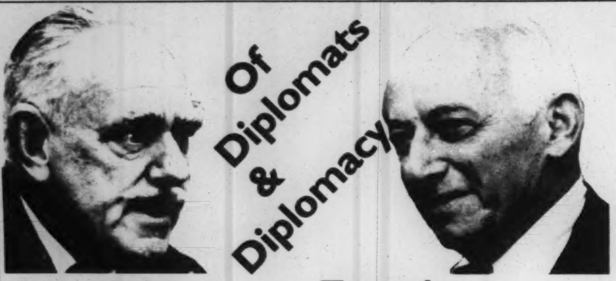

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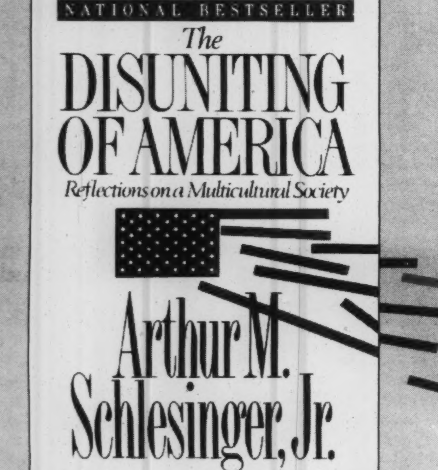

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were holding a prayer meeting. Many were young Russian soldiers in uniform. Electronic music wafted over a sea of bare heads. Banners and slogans hung between the dilapidated old buildings. The service was conducted in German from the back of a truck specially converted to serve as an altar and hold an electric organ. The minister paused frequently to allow for a Russian translation. Later, people lined up to receive small parcels filled with German biscuits or little plastic toys.

German Catholic missionaries are also active. They use as their headquarters an otherwise empty lot in the center of Kaliningrad where a priest and a dozen lay volunteers live in a few large metal boxes and prefabricated huts. Hans Schmidt, a layman from Wuppertal in West Germany, told me that they do social work in the city's hospitals. Several times a week they hold services in the villages and hear confessions in three languages, Russian, Lithuanian, and German. Tens of thousands of Russians who are ethnically German live in Kaliningrad, he said. More were arriving daily from Kazakhstan, where they had been deported from their historic villages on the Volga River by Stalin during the war. They hope that Kaliningrad will soon be restored to Germany or become an autonomous region.

"We are here to reconcile Germans and Russians through Jesus Christ," said Mr. Schmidt. "If the industry of the Germans doesn't make them arrogant and if the Russians' naiveté—they are like children—doesn't lead them into mistakes, the love of God will cause the establishment here of an independent state. It will be modeled on the ancient Order of Teutonic Knights—not because the Knights were German but because, like us now, they spread the word of God in the pagan darkness of Königsberg."

The new magic words in Kaliningrad are Königsberg and Immanuel Kant. There are recurring calls for a referendum on going back to the city's former name. "We are all of us Kant's *Landsmänner*," Ivanov said. He spoke Russian through a translator but he used the word *Landsmänner* in German. One of the first things a tourist sees upon landing at Kaliningrad's newly opened international airport is a big sign "Welcome to Kant's City."[2] At the tomb outside the ruined cathedral Kant is now venerated as a local saint. Newlywed couples go directly from the municipal Marriage Palace to the tomb to pose for photographs. (In the past, the preferred site had been the bust of Karl Marx in a nearby park.) A new monument to Kant, the copy of an original that was demolished after the war, was solemnly inaugurated last summer in the former Paradeplatz by the heads of the city and regional government and a plane-load of distinguished West Germans. There was some talk of renaming the city Kantgrad and I saw a T-shirt inscribed "I ♥ Kant." Königsberg and Kant are, of course, also code names for German money, German power, German influence; Yeltsin's conservative opponents in the city, many of them Russian nationalists, know this. That is why N. A. Medvedev, the university rector, who says he sided with the instigators of the 1991 coup against Gorbachev, is against Kantgrad as a possible new name. "It's not pleasant to the ear," he says. Medvedev prefers a Slavic name that does not hark back to the German past, perhaps Baltijsk.

"Young people here don't know who they are," said Yuri Zabugin, the architect and a native of the city. "Or they want to be someone else. So would you," he told me, "if you had grown up under communism in this awful place." Zabugin is restoring old churches in the city with German money. He is also the curator of an exhibition on the history of Königsberg-Kaliningrad in the local museum. Put together by local arts and crafts students, it is the first independently conceived show in a museum that used to specialize in glorifying the Soviet petroleum or shoe industry. Its title is simply the number "236000," the city's zip-code. "It defines the city's existence," said Zabugin. In the catalog he described the city as a "spot on the map. Its historical name is not forgotten nor is it still valid. The new name is irrelevant and immaterial.... Who are we?"

The regional Kaliningrad government issues warnings that Russia's sovereignty over Kaliningrad must not be questioned, but it is leading the efforts to form cultural and economic links with Germany. It wants Germany to open a consulate and a Goethe Institute in Kaliningrad, and is soliciting German public and private funds to finance industries, tourism, mining, and transportation. It has turned, among others, to Friedrich Christians, the chairman of the powerful Deutsche Bank and the most prominent German financier currently negotiating with the Kaliningrad authorities. A German diplomat in Bonn jokingly calls Christians the *Heimweh*-banker. Christians's connections with Königsberg go back to 1945 when, as a young German soldier, he saw the Red Army's final assault on the city. If Königsberg is rebuilt, he said recently, it "would no longer be a monument to cruel destruction. Rebuilt, it will reflect the hope for peace and reconciliation in Europe."

Mr. Christians has also put forward the idea of making Kaliningrad a free economic zone between East and West, a European Hong Kong or Singapore. The Russian Federation parliament has approved the idea in principle, but arrangements for abolishing customs duties remain to be worked out. The conservative bureaucracy opposes the scheme and the conservatives make up a majority in the regional Kaliningrad parliament. Some of them accuse Vladimir Matutshkin, the head of the regional administration who favors a free-trade zone, of being a "German agent." One of them told a local journalist recently: "If we are not careful we'll soon be governed by old SS men and Japanese samurai." The police chief, Viktor Shoshnikov, recently published an article in *Kaliningradskaya Pravda* claiming that the free-trade zone would only bring in more criminals and drugs.

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[2] Another philosopher from a local family was Hannah Arendt, who grew up in Königsberg. No one I talked to had heard of her, including Vitaly V. Shipov, mayor of Kaliningrad, and Yuri Ivanov.

The military, on the other hand, favors the free-trade zone, since, as Admiral Vladimir Yegorov, the officer commanding the Russian fleet in the Baltic, told me, "the free-trade zone will supply good jobs for retired officers." Few joint ventures with foreigners have been agreed upon. The most serious so far is the rebuilding of Hitler's old Autobahn connecting Königsberg with Berlin. (The Poles are unhappy about this project. Work has begun so far only north of the Polish border.) On the day I met the admiral, ceremonies were taking place on Russian ships in the Baltic celebrating the reintroduction of the old tsarist banner as the official flag of the Russian navy. "Everyone in Kaliningrad is looking forward to the free-trade zone," the admiral said. "Everyone looks forward to big *bizness.*" ☐

Paradise Lost

Andrew Hacker

Boiling Point:
Democrats, Republicans, and the Decline of Middle-Class Prosperity
by Kevin Phillips.
Random House, 307 pp., $23.00

Not only are the rich getting richer, but there are more of them around. In 1978, the Internal Revenue Service received 8,964 returns declaring adjusted gross incomes of more than $1 million in today's dollars. In 1990, its most recent report, it counted 60,667 returns at that level.

More people are also poorer. Since 1978, the proportion of households falling below the poverty line has grown by 26.4 percent. Among families with children, the increase has been 38.3 percent. And there are fewer Americans in the middle. Since 1978, the proportion of families making between $25,000 and $75,000, computed in constant dollars, has dropped from 58.4 percent to 53.9 percent. The latter figure would have fallen even further were not more households relying on two earners.

Figures like these fill the pages of *Boiling Point*, in which Kevin Phillips describes at length the anger of millions of Americans over their loss of income and status during the last dozen years. Having given generous margins to Ronald Reagan and George Bush, Kevin Phillips tells us, they now see themselves as having been betrayed by "an elitist philosophy that celebrated investors, entrepreneurs, and the rich while neglecting the interests of a middle class that found itself increasingly threatened."

Some of Phillips's findings are especially revealing. For example, more than half of the additional income generated between 1977 and 1989 went to the top 1 percent of America's households. In 1980, the compensation of corporate chairmen averaged thirty-five times that of a typical worker. By 1990, average pay and perquisites of the CEOs were 135 times higher. In 1950, a thirty-year-old man with an average salary could expect a paycheck 58 percent higher ten years later. In 1977, he would see his pay rise by only 21 percent during the next decade. Moreover, in 1990, almost a quarter of the unemployment claims filed in Massachusetts came from college-educated workers; and more than half of Arizona's new welfare recipients had never before applied for such assistance.

For a quarter of a century, Kevin Phillips has identified himself as having special insights into the popular mind. As a consultant, he is much attended to by many in political and corporate circles who often feel otherwise remote from the opinions and passions of ordinary Americans. Thus Phillips intersperses his statistics with allusions to "voters from the small-town South, blue-collar Peoria, Levittown or the ends of Northern urban subway lines," whom he characterizes as the "children and grandchildren of Alabama sharecroppers, Montana copper miners, Boston Irish policemen and Hungarian-American steelworkers in Pittsburgh." Nor is Phillips simply a detached analyst of an aggrieved public. His tone makes clear that he wants to speak as their tribune and articulate deep "middle-class frustration" and "fear of downward mobility."

Kevin Phillips

But should the ideology and policies of the Reagan-Bush years be called a "betrayal"? After all, in three successive elections those men and their policies won significant victories. And vital to their majorities were the very voters who, in Phillips's phrase, are now "boiling" over. Indeed, Phillips himself had something to do with the creation of the new conservative coalition.

In 1968, Richard Nixon won the presidency with 43.5 percent of the vote, the smallest such plurality since 1912. Despite that showing, Kevin Phillips, then a young lawyer working with Attorney General John Mitchell, felt no need to revise a book he was completing, which he entitled *The Emerging Republican Majority*.[1] The 1968 contest had been a three-way race, with George Wallace winning five southern states and 13.6 percent of the national vote. Phillips's advice to Nixon—to whom he dedicated his book—was to plan ahead for 1972 by making a home for the Democrats who had been attracted by Wallace's segregationist message. Nor was this simply a "southern strategy." Phillips's reading of the returns showed that the Georgia governor had done well among white voters in the North and West, who were "in motion between a Democratic past and a Republican future."[2]

More specifically, Phillips found that many blue-collar and middle-class whites had become disaffected by the attention the Democratic Party of Lyndon Johnson and George McGovern had been giving to blacks' claims for equal treatment and recognition. "Negro-Democratic mutual identification," he wrote, "was a major source of Democratic loss." For a new Republican majority to form, he went on, its best bet would be to play on white resentment toward "Negro demands." By encouraging "ethnic polarization" and aligning itself with the white side, Phillips prophesied, "the GOP can build a winning coalition without Negro votes."[3] In view of the growth of the Sun Belt and the suburbs, he told Garry Wills, "we don't need the big cities, we don't even want them." The "whole secret of politics," he said, is "knowing who hates who."[4] It would not be a great exaggeration to say that the young Kevin Phillips helped prepare the way for the use of Willie Horton in the 1988 campaign.

By all outward indications, the strategy worked. As Table A shows (see below), Nixon's 1972 percentage exceeded his and Wallace's combined showings four years earlier. While the Watergate debacle made Carter's victory possible, it gave the GOP four years to come up with a candidate who could give the party a populist energy. Playing the racial card remained part of the plan, as did rallying the religious right on moral issues. But Ronald Reagan embodied a nationalism that transcended party loyalties, one that pitted American purity against an Evil Empire. The voters who came to be called "Reagan Democrats" were those Phillips had identified in his 1969 book.

But it seems ingenuous to claim that these voters could have been oblivious to the favoritism that the Republicans were extending to the rich. When Phillips spoke of the Sun Belt, he had in mind not only the modest suburbs of San Diego and Dallas, but also the new fortunes being made in oil and savings and loan institutions. Nor can it be said that, until the recent recession, members of this new Republican

TABLE A
REPUBLICAN RISE AND FALL

Share of Votes: 1968–1992

		Total	*Two-Party*
1968	Nixon	43.5%	50.4%
1972	Nixon	60.7%	61.8%
1976	Ford	48.0%	48.9%
1980	Reagan	50.7%	55.3%
1984	Reagan	58.8%	59.2%
1988	Bush	53.4%	53.9%
1992	Bush	37.7%	46.6%

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[1] Arlington House, 1969.

[2] *The Emerging Republican Majority*, p. 463.

[3] *The Emerging Republican Majority*, pp. 468, 470.

[4] *Nixon Agonistes* (Houghton Mifflin, 1970), p. 265.

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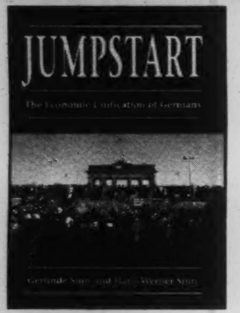

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majority objected to the preferment accorded to the aerospace industry and the profitable investments of medical doctors. If they wanted—and got—a party dedicated to "family values" and white supremacy, they knew that others at the GOP table were more interested in corporate profits and amassing personal wealth. So it is not clear that they were "betrayed." In 1992, however, some of the Reagan Democrats were afraid the extra recession would continue if Bush stayed in office.

The figures in Table B partly bear out Phillips's thesis. In the recent election, George Bush lost support at all levels, including among college graduates and those making more than $75,000. But he retained his majority among white voters. Had the balloting been confined to a white electorate, he would now be presiding as a plurality president. (Post-election polls found Perot's supporters divided almost evenly on their second choice: 38 percent for Clinton and 37 percent for Bush. Most of the rest said that if Perot had not been on the ballot, they would have stayed at home.)

Phillips is not ready to say that the voters Clinton won over will provide a lasting Democratic majority in presidential elections. If they changed chiefly for economic reasons, will they return to their Republican ways when things get better? The "Negro-Democratic mutual identification," which Phillips pointed to in the late 1960s, continues to characterize the party and is now joined by a similar linkage to homosexuality. The lesson of the last quarter-century has been that only a bleak economy can defuse emotion-laden issues involving racial conflict, welfare, and sexual behavior. Yet in the current situation, an emphasis on economic policy means more than winding down the recession, or even reducing the budget. Ironically, what may give Clinton a second term, and ensure a Democratic majority, will be a growing realization that for all classes of Americans, a relatively high rate of unemployment will be a chronic condition.

In citing the causes of the recent redistribution of wealth and income, Phillips estimates that "willful governmental action—direct and indirect—probably accounted for 30 to 50 percent of this upward shift." Along with others who make their careers in or around Washington, Phillips is apt to overstress the impact of public policies. Thus he devotes entire chapters to the incentives and disincentives that flow from the federal regulation of interest rates and from tax breaks, the cost of bailouts of corporations and S&Ls by the government, and overt and covert subsidies. Unfortunately, *Boiling Point* has little to say about decisions and developments for which the government is not responsible. Indeed, Phillips's own figures allow that anywhere from 50 to 70 percent of the movement of money to the upper-income groups can be attributed to changes within the private sector. One example has been the propensity of executives to take more from corporate revenues to fatten their own paychecks. At the same time, unions have been beaten back, payrolls and benefits have been slashed, and plants have been closed by shifting production overseas.

Employers have also been in large part responsible for changing the balance between men and women within their work forces, another cause of the changing distribution of income. Among full-time workers in 1971, there were 435 women for every 1,000 men. By 1991, the ratio had risen to 677 for each 1,000 men. More than that, the wages paid to men have declined, or at best barely budged. Since 1971, their median earnings in full-time jobs, in current dollars, inched from $29,702 down to $29,421. During those two decades, women's earnings increased from $17,674 to $20,553.[5] If employers are giving women jobs that were once reserved for men, the reason is not necessarily governmental prodding. While their wages have risen, the fact remains that women are often being taken on because they will work for less money. Indeed, in aggregate terms, the advances made by women have actually undercut the total amount of income going to working people.

TABLE B

WHO BACKED BUSH?

Share of Two-Party Vote: 1988 and 1992

	1988	*1992*
All Voters	54%	47%
White Voters	60%	51%
Less Than $15,000	37%	28%
$30,000 to $50,000	56%	48%
More Than $75,000	63%	57%
High School Dropouts	43%	34%
High School Graduates	51%	46%
College Graduates	63%	51%
Graduate Degrees	51%	42%

Source: *New York Times*–CBS News Poll

Between 1970 and 1991, moreover, the proportion of families headed by single mothers more than doubled, rising from 9.9 percent to 21.1 percent.[6] Despite gains in women's wages, most of the single mothers who work hold low-paying jobs or live on public assistance, which in even the most generous states remains below the poverty line. The growing number of such households brings down the average figure for family income. Another "social" cause of the change in income distribution has been the decision to postpone marriage. Today, 18.8 percent of women who reach thirty are still unmarried, as are 29.4 percent of the men. Two decades ago, the respective percentages were 6.2 percent and 9.4 percent.[7] While some of these unmarried adults share quarters with one other person, most do not. Because single-person domiciles have only one wage earner, an increasing number of them serve to pull down the average income figure for households as a whole.

In the past, many more Americans spent all of their lives within traditional families. Two married people who live together require less overhead than do divorced spouses living on their own. The same principle applies to children who stay under the family roof until they get married. While the new arrangements are becoming socially acceptable, we have been less willing to acknowledge that they are considerably more expensive. And since incomes have not been rising to meet these added costs, the result has been a fall in living standards, not only among the poor but also the middle class. It is not surprising that fewer economic complaints are heard from fundamentalist families, where parents remain together and children marry earlier.

High expectations for changing the economy have been raised for the new administration. When an opposition party takes power, it tends to promise sweeping changes and to be more responsive to the public's complaints. As it happens, recent surveys have shown strong support for the President's economic proposals, which is significant when we consider that over half of the voters supported one of his opponents. According to one *New York Times*–CBS News Poll, two thirds of the people interviewed said they understand that they would pay higher taxes, but still regarded the plan as fair toward people like themselves.[8]

Nevertheless, they have reservations. While 70 percent would be willing to pay $100 more a year to reduce the deficit, only 15 percent would be willing if the amount rises to $500. Half also oppose a serious increase in energy taxes, a reminder that most households own at least one car and have to heat single-family homes. Perhaps most revealing of all, 70 percent suspect that "the rich will figure out a way to get around" paying "the largest share of new taxes." Still, the polls present evidence that, contrary to fears of politicans, Clinton has succeeded in showing that Americans do not adamantly believe that they need not pay a penny more for public purposes.

During its early months, the administration has given the highest priority to raising revenues to reduce the deficit. However, the Clinton campaign promised more than redressing the budget and ending the recession. It committed itself to restoring the nation's economic growth, which would "create millions of high-wage jobs."[9]

This was an unprecedented pledge. The jobs the New Deal created paid very low wages, but at that time they were eagerly accepted nonetheless. Today we hear less about public works, perhaps because today's workers want the status and respect that go with private jobs. But creating new jobs will not be easy, especially when firms like Sears, General Motors, and IBM see slashing their payrolls as not simply a response to the current downturn but as long-term strategies. It remains to be seen if, during a period of economic recovery, firms can be induced to restore the relatively well-paid positions they have been eliminating, whether by replacing people with machines or removing middle managers or substituting lower-paid help both at home and abroad. It may well be that companies will no longer feel they need that many employees at, say, the $40,000 level. At one point even Phillips writes that too many production workers have been "overpaid." Yet the seemingly high wage scales he refers to were important in creating the large middle class which is central to his analysis.

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[5] Bureau of the Census, *Money Income of Household, Families, and Persons in the United States*, P–60, No. 180, Table B–16.

[6] Bureau of the Census, *Household and Family Characteristics*, P–20, No. 458, Table A.

[7] Bureau of the Census, *Marital Status and Living Arrangements*, P–20, No. 468, Table C.

[8] CBS News Poll, February 20–21, 1993. The percentages cited are based on those having an opinion.

[9] Bill Clinton and Al Gore, *Putting People First* (Times Books, 1992), p. 3.

Some perspective may be gained by examining how the total amount of money that is used to pay Americans to work—what David Ricardo called the nation's "wages fund"—is now distributed. In 1991, the most recent year for such figures, some $2.9 trillion in wages and salaries and fees was paid to the approximately 130 million men and women who worked at one time or another during the year. As Table C shows, the economy created 80.3 million full-time, year-round jobs, which represented 61.6 percent of the overall work force, and absorbed 82.1 percent of the earnings fund. This left 17.9 percent of all earnings for the 50.1 million workers who held part-time jobs or worked less than the full year. While some of these men and women may only have wanted partial employment, we know that many would have preferred steady work, but were unable to obtain it because the economy was paying so much of total wages to those already in place. Indeed, there is a growing class of "contingent" workers, who are hired on a temporary basis at lower rates and without benefits.

TABLE C
THE NATION'S PAYROLL

Total Sum Distributed as Earnings: $2,911,260,000,000

Work Schedules	*Number of Workers*		*Median Earnings*	*Share of Payroll*
Men, Full-time, Full-Year	47,844,000	36.7%	$29,421	56.5%
Women, Full-time, Full-Year	32,420,000	24.9%	$20,553	25.6%
Men, Part-time, Part-Year	22,301,000	17.1%	$10,890	9.7%
Women, Part-time, Part-Year	27,794,000	21.3%	$7,681	8.2%
Total	130,359,000	100.0%	$18,963	100.0%

Source: Bureau of the Census (1991)

Of course, many people with year-round jobs are poorly paid. Even so, some 10.7 million Americans had earnings of $50,000 or more, and 1.6 million were paid over $100,000 a year. Some $50,000 jobs are already being cut back: unionized airline pilots, for example, or professors who will be replaced by part-time "adjunct" lecturers. But as Kevin Phillips argues, things are getting better at the top, since persons earning more than $100,000 have not only grown in numbers, but have managed to commandeer a greater share of the money available as earnings.

The test will be how far our kind of government can strengthen the nation's economic base so as to create more wealth and more decently paid jobs. If this is to happen, many patterns of behavior will have to be changed, whether through public incentives or other means. We hardly need reminding that Americans favor spending over saving, while those who do invest look more for paper profits than long-term capital formation. Or, to cite another aspect of investment, many Americans seem reluctant to press their children to apply themselves to difficult subjects at school. No doubt, most people will reply that they "work hard," indeed that they have less leisure time than ever. Yet exertion in and of itself will not augment the nation's product, especially when so much of what we call work consists of conversing and conferring and consulting with one another.

So the issue is whether the US can create the wealth it will need to produce Clinton's well-paid jobs and restore Kevin Phillips's middle class. If America's middle class is shrinking, that same class has been growing throughout Europe and Asia and much of Latin America. If countries in those regions are supplanting us, it is because they are outmatching us in discipline and skills, indeed in showing that they are more efficient and imaginative at providing what the world wants. ☐

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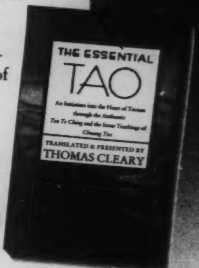

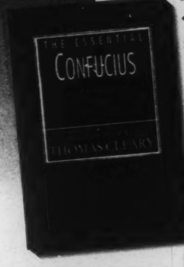

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Hanging Out with Greeks

The Oldest Dead White European Males and Other Reflections on the Classics
by Bernard Knox.
Norton, 144 pp., $15.95

New Perspectives in Early Greek Art
edited by Diana Buittron-Oliver.
National Gallery of Art/distributed by the University Press of New England, 308 pp., $50.00; $25.00 (paper)

The Norton Book of Classical Literature
edited by Bernard Knox.
Norton, 866 pp., $29.95

Garry Wills

When Bernard Knox was chosen by the National Endowment for the Humanities to give the 1992 Jefferson Lecture, the head of the Endowment at the time, Lynne Cheney, interviewed Knox for the Endowment's magazine. Expressing her amazement that Knox had a good word for the Sophists, Cheney argued: "Is it possible that that is a bit of sophistry? Are you making the worse the better cause when you write about the Sophists?"[1] Knox pointed out that the Sophists brought skills to the democracy. Cheney: "But the worse is still the worse cause." Knox said the Greek for "worse" need not mean more than "weaker." Cheney: "So it's complete relativism, then." When Knox said the study of the humanities—Cheney's field of expertise—came from the Sophists, she tried to derive humane studies from Plato: "The Sophists had one approach to the humanities and the Platonists another, an approach that emphasized the idea of truth, as opposed to the extreme relativistic stance of the Sophists."

There you have, in capsule form, the difference between "classicism" and classical learning. If the study of the classics were what Cheney takes it to be, that would be reason enough for getting rid of it. For her, the classics are a fixed thing that supports one's own prior certitudes, fending off any ambiguity as "extreme relativism." Since she knows (at second or third hand) what the classics must mean, she could lecture one of the leading scholars of our time rather than interview him (or learn from him). Such use of the classics impedes thought instead of promoting it. Even when Cheney thought she was reading Plato, she was really reading Allan Bloom or Leo Strauss, not Plato.

If Cheney thought, during the interview, that the Endowment might have chosen the wrong lecturer for her purposes, Knox's new book will confirm her worst fears. *The Oldest Dead White European Males* prints that Jefferson Lecture and two other talks, in one of which we read:

> It is often said that the importance of Socrates in the history of Western thought is that he brought theory down from the skies, from cosmological speculation, to the human world, to the moral and political problems of mankind. But this was in fact the achievement of the Sophists, who created an education designed for the first great democracy.... It was Plato, of course, who made the word "Sophists" into a term of abuse *and also, though this aspect of his work is seldom mentioned, tried to suppress the new humanities.* (Emphasis added.)

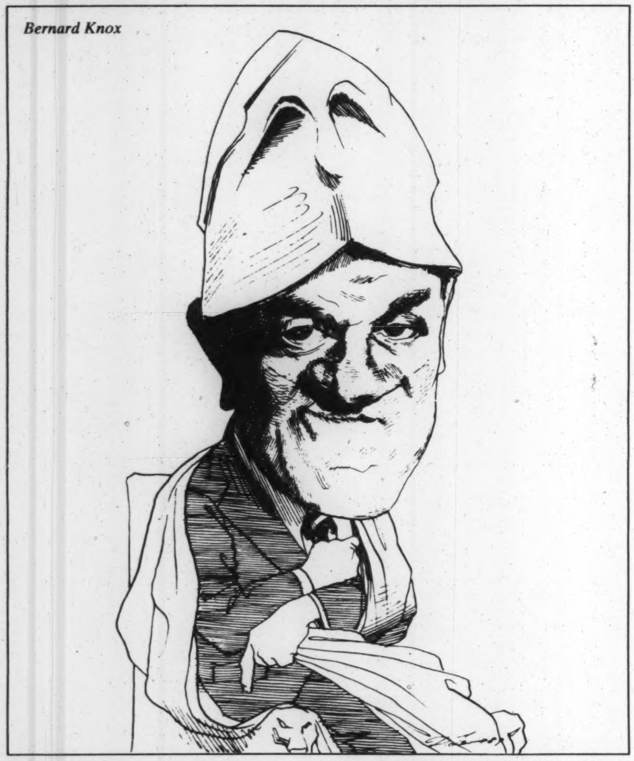
The old schema "Plato moral, Sophists immoral" can be reversed in certain matters, where Plato now stands for values we cannot honor. As Knox points out, the Sophists were unique in their time for questioning the superiority of Greeks to barbarians, men to women, free-born to slaves. No doubt that was "relativistic" to many Athenians, as well as to Lynne Cheney.

Knox argues that the Greeks have been the useful *troublers*, not the soothers, of mankind—in their day and ever after. Modern "classicism" argues that Athens, the first democracy, was a light to all later ages, offering an ideal of freedom preserved in "the classical tradition." In fact, however, Athens was considered such a disorderly and short-lived experiment in "extreme relativism" that it *discredited* democracy for over two millennia. Only in the last century did Athens become admired for its form of government. Up to that point, Roman control of classical memory had made Sparta the ideal Greek polis.[2]

When Athens did become a modern ideal, a great part of the Athenian reality was suppressed—the city's slavery, domination of women, and acceptance of homosexuality. Benjamin Jowett and others turned Plato into an upstanding Victorian gentleman, doing much of Allan Bloom's work for him. As Moses Finley points out, there is not a single entry for "slaves" in the exhaustive indices to Werner Jaeger's three-volume *Paideia*, a favorite text of recent "classicism."[3] This cult of antiquity was called "mystical classicizing" by Arnaldo Momigliano.[4] It still exists, and can crop up in the oddest places. We expect Lynne Cheney to idealize what is clearly a vague memory to her. But even a fine troubler of our own democracy, I.F. Stone, could chide Socrates for being insufficiently reverential toward a faultless liberal like Pericles. If it is asked how a modern "gadfly" like Stone can demand conformity of Socrates, Stone announces that Athens gave little or no reason to oppose the democracy:

> Athens had no Alien and Sedition Laws. Athens had no little Iron Curtain like the McCarran-Walter immigration act to bar visitors with suspect ideas.... Athens never had an un-Athenian Activities Investigating Committee.... If ever a city deserved the full energy and devotion of its citizens, that city was Athens.[5]

How, then, could this model city condemn Socrates? That is the question that puzzled Stone. He concluded that Socrates tricked the city into killing him—just as he "trapp[ed] Meletus into calling him an atheist."[6] Socrates refused to say the words that would have acquitted him "because his victory would also have been a victory for the democratic principles he scorned." Socrates wanted to use his martyrdom to hurt his city: "An acquittal would have vindicated Athens."[7] What were the magic words that would have acquitted? "Free speech." On that everyone in Athens, excepting only Socrates and his followers, was agreed. That is why "all the leading citizens of the city were lined up against Socrates."[8] Only he and his followers were "out of step with their time."[9]


Bernard Knox

One would never suspect from Stone's book that not only most Greek authors, but most surviving *Athenian* authors, were opposed to the Periclean democracy. Stone treats Aristotle as the champion of that democracy; but Aristotle was harshly critical of Pericles—he preferred Theramenes, a member of "the Thirty Tyrants," a figure associated with Socrates in antiquity.[10] Stone refers often to Pericles' funeral oration, without any sense of its ironies—revealed in the next speech Thucydides gave to Pericles, a defense of empire at all costs.

It is true that Thucydides, a critic of the empire, thought that leaders like Pericles were necessary if one *did* have an empire—but he says the same thing of Alcibiades, another figure associated with Socrates.[11] Implicit misgivings about Periclean empire are traceable in the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides—Knox himself famously emphasized the Periclean aspect of Sophocles' tragic Oedipus.[12] Of the extant dramatists only Aeschylus (in what remains of him) seems to have been a consistent celebrator of the democracy. This should give pause to the critics of an "adversary culture" in America—who are usually "mystical classicizers" on the subject of Athens. Poor Stone really does not belong in their company; but he ended up there once he accepted the mythical claim of Athens as an ideal democracy.

The idealization of Athens has

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[1] Lynne V. Cheney, "A Conversation with Bernard Knox," *Humanities*, May–June 1992, pp. 35–36.

[2] See Elizabeth Rawson, *The Spartan Tradition in European Thought* (Clarendon Press/Oxford University Press, 1969).

[3] M.S. Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (Penguin, 1983), p. 57. For *Paideia* as "one of the most respected, and one of the dullest, learned books of our century," see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Blood for the Ghosts* (Duckworth, 1982), p. 178.

[4] For Momigliano on *misticismo classicistico*, see *Rivista storica Italiana*, Vol. 84 (1972), p. 753.

[5] I.F. Stone, *The Trial of Socrates* (Anchor Books, 1989), pp. 197, 99.

[6] Stone, *Trial*, p. 201.

[7] Stone, *Trial*, p. 198.

[8] Stone, *Trial*, p. 174.

[9] Stone, *Trial*, p. 19.

[10] For an argument that Aristotle himself associated Theramenes with Socrates, see John J. Keaney, *The Composition of Aristotles' "Athenian Politica"* (Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 147–148. Both Socrates and Theramenes studied with the Sophist Prodicus.

[11] Thucydides, *Histories*, 6.15.4. And see Steven Forde, *The Ambition to Rule: Alcibiades and the Politics of Imperialism in Thucydides* (Cornell University Press, 1989).

[12] Bernard Knox, *Oedipus at Thebes* (Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 63–64: "The resemblances between Oedipus and Pericles, though it is true that they have often been exaggerated and over interpreted, are still striking and not to be lightly dismissed.... Sophocles is not a comic poet attacking a contemporary politician as Aristophanes did Cleon in *The Knights*; these similarities are only incidental details of a basic pattern which suggests a comparison of Oedipus not to any individual Athenian but to Athens itself."

blinded people to the realities of Greek slavery and female repression. Camille Paglia, a believer in "the luminous element of ritualized Apollonianism in ancient Athenian culture," thinks that women had a soft time of it in Athens: "The portrait of Greek women as jailed and oppressed fails to acknowledge the historical fact that male law and order also provided protection, security, and physical sustenance to women and children."[13] Paglia, despite her eccentricity, has been welcomed by some conservatives as a harpy conveniently fouling the banquet table of feminists and anti-canonists. For their purposes, she is a Lynne Cheney with fangs. But her treatment of classical women resembles the defense of Athenian slavery as different from other cultures' oppression, not only because of the Athenians' "having on the whole treated their slaves liberally," but because the slaves incidentally contributed to the great spiritual achievements of Hellas.[14] Yet Gregory Vlastos has shown how slavery, far from being an incidental cost of spiritual achievements, fundamentally shaped and perverted the spiritual ideals themselves.[15] The restrictions placed on slaves in Plato's *Laws* were not only harsher than any in Athens, but were "less liberal than any known slave legislation of classical antiquity," for reasons grounded in Plato's metaphysics.[16]

Knox's Jefferson Lecture demonstrates the way classical learning can rescue us from the nonsense purveyed by "classicism." He describes the current rescue effort in four areas—in the studies of anthropology, psychology, women, and slaves. Greek anthropologists studying practices like ancient sacrifice have to draw on parallels in other societies, ancient or undeveloped. In the collection to which Knox contributes an essay, *New Perspectives in Early Greek Art*, Walter Burkert shows how certain ritual scenes in Homer make no sense in themselves, though they reveal their point when we see how they imitate Near Eastern ritual. It turns out that the oldest dead white European males were not entirely European after all.

In the realm of psychology, Knox's contribution to *New Perspectives* dismantles Bruno Snell's influential argument that the Homeric period had no concept of the living human body as a whole, since it had no word for it (only for the dead body, *soma*). Knox shows that some terms were used for the whole living body—*demas, eidos, phye*. Their use was restricted by the artificial nature of epic language; but the concept is revealed through the use of names, or of the voices that address the body's parts, or of the descriptions and epithets applied to whole persons. The Jefferson Lecture adds a further point: if Snell's argument from silence is to be used, then we anglophones have no experience or recognition of *Schadenfreude*, since we have no single word for it. The range and wit of Knox's references here are typical of his graceful scholarship.[17]

On the subject of women, Knox shows how modern feminism has changed our understanding of Greek culture. It used to be argued that the Athenians really *did* have a high regard for women, despite the way wives were muted and immobilized in real life—a regard that shows up in heroines of Greek tragedy, in Antigone or Alcestis. But Froma Zeitlin shows that women represent the generally menacing "other" in Greek tragedy, setting tests for male heroism (as monsters and foes also do), without upsetting the paternalism of the society.[18]

Knox says less about the new treatment of Greek slavery, perhaps because Moses Finley has said so much, forcing hard truths on the mystical devotees of Athens:

> Buckland noted that "There is scarcely a problem" in Roman law "the solution of which may not be affected by the fact that one of the parties to the transaction is a slave." That is too narrow. I should say that there was no action or belief or institution in Graeco-Roman antiquity that was not one way or other affected by the possibility that some one individual *might* be a slave.[19]

Those who draw a romantic picture of poor Socrates living free of material encumbrance resolutely overlook the fact that a person who could afford to study with the Sophist Prodicus, who lived as an intellectual inquirer without the need to work, and who qualified as a property-holding hoplite free to train and campaign in the wars, obviously had an estate of some sort that involved slaves.[20] Part of the hoplite's equipage was not only his expensive and heavy armor but the "batman" slave (*hypēretēs*) who maintained that armor and scouted up provisions. Socrates no doubt went to war (at least four times) attended by a personal body servant—how that information would have delighted I. F. Stone!

I am surprised that Knox does not add gay studies to the things that are rejuvenating classical learning.[21] Those who recently made such a fuss over gays in the military are often the same ones who base Western civilization on the victories that turned back "the barbarian" at Thermopylae, fought by largely homosexual Spartans, and Marathon, fought by Athenians of the generation of Aeschylus, who were well disposed toward homosexuals. As K. J. Dover wrote:

> It may well be that the late sixth and early fifth centuries, the generation of men who (like Aiskhylos) defeated the Persians, witnessed a more open, headstrong, sensual glorification of homosexuality than any other period in antiquity.[22]

Aeschylus, after all, wrote a most erotic line for his homosexual lovers Achilles and Patroclus: "The holy traffic with your thighs" (*mērōn te tōn sōn eusebēs homilia*).[23] The important work of John Winkler, David Halperin, and others is demonstrating that almost every prior generalization about Greek homosexuality is dubious or in need of reassessment.

Of the two talks Knox appended to the Jefferson Lecture, one is a charming account of his year spent in Athens, discovering that there are continuities between ancient and modern Greece—a thing "classicism" has usually denied. Ingram Bywater, the British Aristotelian, refused to visit modern Greece, for fear it would disturb his mental picture of ancient beauty, and Camille Paglia thinks only *The Reader's Digest* would try to find signs of ancient Greek life in modern

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[13] Camille Paglia, *Sex, Art, and American Culture* (Vintage, 1992), pp. 197, 205. See p. 172 on "the great tradition of classical scholarship coming down to us from Winckelmann." She shares this cult of Winckelmann with her admired decadents, Pater and J.A. Symonds. For their attitude toward Winckelmann, see Richard Dellamora, *Masculine Desire: The Sexual Politics of Victorian Aestheticism* (University of North Carolina, 1990), pp. 112–115.

[14] Joseph Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man*, translated by Thomas Wiedmann (Harvard University Press, 1975), pp. 24–25.

[15] Gregory Vlastos, "Slavery in Plato's Thought," in *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 149–163. Bernard Williams has traced a similar perversion of Aristotle's thought by slavery, in *Shame and Necessity* (University of California Press, 1993), pp. 110–118.

[16] Vlastos, "Slavery in Plato's Thought," p. 151.

[17] Williams could not read Knox in time to use these arguments for his criticism of Snell in *Shame and Necessity* (pp. 21–40).

[18] Froma I. Zeitlin, "Playing the Other," in *Nothing To Do with Dionysos?* edited by John J. Winkler and Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 69: "*Functionally*, women are never an end in themselves" in Greek tragedy—which does not mean, as Zeitlin shows, that ironies do not emerge from the interplay of self with other in the treatment of great dramatists, even within a paternalistic culture.

[19] Finley, *Ancient Slavery*, p. 65.

[20] Socrates' father, Sophroniscus, from whom he presumably inherited, was a man of great standing in Athens, as we learn from Plato's *Laches* 181a.

[21] He did treat new studies in homosexuality in his 1989 book, *Essays, Ancient and Modern* (The Johns Hopkins University Press), pp. 116–126.

[22] K. J. Dover, *Greek Homosexuality* (Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 198.

[23] Hans Joachim Mette, *Die Fragmente der Tragödien des Aischylos* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1959), p. 81. The line was preserved in Lucian, *The Loves* 54. Its language supports the vases on the importance of intercrural copulation at the time.

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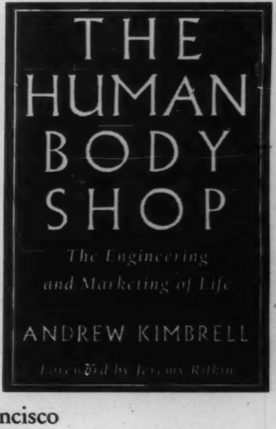

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Although everything in this imaginative and compelling biography of the martyred Chilean president Salvador Allende (1908-1973) is solidly based on fact, it is cast in the form of a novel. Why a novel? The author answers, "Writing about a personal friend who also happens to be a historical figure has induced me to go beyond the simple facts: there are moods I must describe and interpret, words that I can hear which were perhaps not said, rumors, events that I did not witness and yet I feel I know how they happened. All this has become a hidden world that calls for a novelist, not just a reporter."

This is a very human portrait that presents not only Allende the national and international leader, the social fighter, the political wizard, but also Allende the man: ambitious, kind, tough, brilliant, and vulnerable to women. The book also recreates key stages of twentieth-century Chilean cultural history and gives a detailed account of the background and events of the bloody military coup of September 11, 1973. Illus. $24.95

Athens.[24] But Knox knows that survivals in the popular culture do occur (games, music, spells).[25] He also found his stay useful for correcting the impressions that "classicism" made on his youth—including the idea that Greek gods and heroes were tall white Aryans in appearance. Actually the "blond (*xanthoi*) heroes" of Homer are probably brown-haired, and most references to hair in classical Greek are to black or dark hair. The skin of the ancients was no doubt swarthy, since they were not only Mediterraneans but spent much of their life in the open air, sometimes competing naked under a punishing sun. In black-figure vases, the women, always pent inside, are white, the males (human or divine) are black. Dead white European males were not all that *white*, after all.

Knox has just published a Norton anthology of classical prose and poetry in translation. As one might expect from a man who has been principally a Hellenist, the Greek world prevails over the Roman (roughly 500 pages of Greek to 250 of Latin authors). Knox defends this by saying that Greek survives translation better. But the *Greek Anthology* items would reveal their later influence if some excerpts from Martial were included. Anthologies, of course, are always things to argue with, and this one has uniformly readable modern translations, along with an introduction that gives the latest and most accurate information on both cultures.

The learning of that introduction shows that Knox is a master of the latest discoveries in his field. He acquired the traditional skills of philology in England and America. But no one could ever accuse him of being a scholar in the sense Yeats gave that term:

> *All shuffle there; all cough in*
> *ink;*
> *All wear the carpet with their*
> *shoes;*
> *All think what other people think;*
> *All know the man their neigh-*
> *bour knows.*
> *Lord, what would they say*
> *Did their Catullus walk that*
> *way?*[26]

Knox, born in England to a jazz-pianist father, won a classical scholarship to Cambridge in 1933. On graduation, he sold all of his classical books to finance a trip to Spain, where his friend John Cornford (son of the Plato scholar, Francis Cornford) had preceded him. They made up, with a third friend named MacLaurin, a team of three from Cambridge fighting Franco. Knox alone of the three survived, and he was severely wounded in the neck and shoulder. He has described himself at the time as "wildly left wing," and he was issued a Communist Party card in Spain—a thing that would pose a threat to him in the McCarthy period, when he was a young faculty member at Yale. The right-wing professor Willmoore Kendall took Knox to lunch for scrutiny, and then issued this *laissez-passer:* "You know, in Germany, Nazi Party leaders were allowed to have one Jewish friend, whom they protected from persecution. You are my Jewish friend."

Actually, it would have been hard for McCarthyites to challenge the patriotism of a man who became a United States citizen in time to fight World War II behind the lines in France and with the partisans in Italy, winning both the Bronze Star and the Croix de Guerre. Since Knox was in the OSS, there is a fascinating picture of him being awarded the Bronze Star by General "Wild Bill" Donovan. His "Jedburgh" team, which parachuted into France, was chosen by tests that favored "troublemakers"—the fear was that members of the team dropped into France would go to ground and do nothing. Knox, on the basis of his exploits in Spain, was not even tested. His credentials as a troublemaker were in order—which gives weight to his estimate of the Greeks as the great troublemakers of the mind. Even as a graduate student at Yale, he was enough out of step in choosing his dissertation topic that he could find no one on the faculty to direct it.

Knox points out in the introduction to his lectures that the study of antiquity—sometimes a refuge for conservatives like Jaeger or Heidegger—has also been a good school for rebels. This was as true of Freud or Nietzsche as of Marx. Marx was classicaly trained in Bonn by great scholars like A.W. Schlegel and F.G. Welcker. He translated Ovid. He read Aeschylus and Homer, in Greek, throughout his life. His doctoral thesis was a study of the Greek philosophers Democritus and Epicurus.[27] That the Greeks still speak to radicals I learned from my anarchist friend, Karl Hess. In his right-anarchist days he wrote speeches for Barry Goldwater. In his left-anarchist days he was a Vietnam War protester. Arrested together at one demonstration, we shared a cell and had lots of time to talk about lots of things, including Greek (since I had a Greek New Testament with me). I told him I thought the most economical intellectual investment one can make is learning Greek—it gives access to the most influential texts in our history, from the New Testament to the founding examples of drama, oratory, philosophy. I mentioned what Izzy Stone had told me, that he regretted he had come to Greek so late in life. Weeks later we were at a follow-up demonstration and Karl said, "I'm going to stay by you and hope we can get in the same cell again." I asked why. "I've been teaching myself Greek and I want to go over verb forms." (We were arrested together but put in different cells.)

Hess was not looking for some perfect past, but for tools to use in the present. "Classicism" holds that the Greeks would be valueless if they did not offer us a model for imitation. The Greeks have to be considered as superhuman—too noble, Winckelmann said, to display suffering in their faces. Lessing wrote:

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[24] Paglia, *Sex, Art, and American Culture*, p. 194.

[25] For the perdurance of magic practices, see Christopher Faraone, "Aristophanes, *Amphiaraus*, Fr. 29," *The Classical Quarterly*, n.s. 42 (1992), pp. 320–327.

[26] "The Scholars," in *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats*, edited by Peter Allt and Russell K. Alspach (Macmillan, 1968), p. 337.

[27] S.S. Prawer, *Karl Marx and World Literature* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 1–27.

> Beautiful statues fashioned from beautiful men reacted upon their creators, and the state was indebted for its beautiful men to beautiful statues.[28]

If the Greeks were not so noble after all, it is best to conceal that fact, to keep up a Platonic "noble lie" about them. The great scholar Ulrich von Wilomowitz-Moellendorff rebuked Jacob Burckhardt for treating the Greeks like any other people. In the sacred place at Delphi, for instance, Burckhardt saw this in the votive offerings for victories won by individual cities: "the great monumental museum of Greek hatred against other Greeks, with the greatest prolongation art could achieve of sufferings inflicted back and forth."[29]

Why study the Greeks, if they are not models of excellence? One of the best answers was given in W.H. Auden's introduction to the *Viking Portable Greek Reader.* He destroys certain myths of "classicism"—that the Greeks were central in their humanness (very peculiar family, those Labdacids, wouldn't you say?), that Greek drama is a model for later drama (it was, in some ways, more like a modern bullfight), that we can or should try to reinhabit something called a "Greek mind." He treats Hellenic ideals with iconoclastic breeziness.

> There is no single Greek literary work of art as great as *The Divine Comedy*; there is no extant series of works by a single Greek literary artist as impressive as the complete plays of Shakespeare; as a period of sustained creative activity in one medium, the seventy-five odd years of Athenian drama, between the first tragedies of Aeschylus and the last comedy of Aristophanes, are surpassed by the hundred and twenty-five years, between Gluck's *Orpheus* and Verdi's *Otello*, which comprise the golden age of European opera.[30]

Auden says it is not what the Greeks *did* that matters so much as the questions they asked themselves about what they were doing. All cultures have some kind of liturgical drama; but the Greeks are the first whose reflections are available to us, on a large scale, who asked themselves what on earth they were up to—why they were doing what they did, and how they could do it well. Aristotle looked at a Greek tragedy as he looked at a cow—to see how the parts work, what makes it go, what use it is. The empirical and descriptive task was not perfectly performed, so far as we can tell from the extant plays; but it was a tremendous breakthrough in self-consciousness about complex human activities.

Not that Aristotle's gaze was pure. He brought to the cow (or to the play) his own theoretical puzzlements. He was always interested in the problem of change, how one thing can become another (and stay at least partly the same). So drama gets forced into that set of concerns. Tragedy is treated as a *metabolē* from one emotional state to another. In his general theory of change, Aristotle held that a certain space for movement from one thing to another, a gap or emptiness to be filled, a deprivation (*sterēsis*), is a requisite. In drama, that *sterēsis* becomes the lack in what the hero is (or knows) before he becomes something else, the *hamartia* later rigidified into a "tragic flaw." Classicism tries to derive from Aristotle *rules* for Greek drama, and indeed for all drama. Classical learning sees in the *Poetics* one way theory can be applied to art, a trail-blazing way in itself, but also one that suggests endless ways other theories can be applied.

Athens was caught up, in the fifth century, in a rage for theory. It made the French schools of our day look tame and imitative. Everything was coming into question. The whole place was one Brainery—to extend Aristophanes' term (*phrontistērion*) for the Socratic circle. No wonder the Romans thought Athens kept an intellectual "disorderly house," one they felt had to be shut down. Such binges of the mind do not last long. The Athenian one was a lopsided achievement, and it could not have occurred but for enabling conditions in themselves despicable—slavery, the empire, the position of women. It was an example of male-military-intellectual hypertrophy, as monstrous as it is instructive. Even the evils of the system have an instructive side to them—James Oakes testifies to the fact that Finley's work on ancient slavery has decisively shaped the study of slavery in the modern world.[31] Marx would have expected that.

There is an advantage to coming first in the large-scale kind of inquiry the ancient Greeks initiated. It is not true, as the old saying goes, that all later philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato. But much of later philosophy is a *dialogue* with Plato, if only to refute him or fight the undesirable consequences of his views (or others' misstatements of those views). If we heed only the later philosophers, we are hearing just one side of the conversation, a frustrating and dangerous deprivation. Virgil and Milton are engaged in a dialogue with Homer. If we hear only Milton and not Homer, we are not even hearing Milton. Though some have tried to use the classics to close discussions, the Greeks, properly understood, are the great conversation openers. They are not torches shining upon our darkness. They are more like the street lamps of history, near which people have recurrently gathered to argue with others. One goes to them for the interesting people one meets there. Marx is there. So is Auden. So is that interesting fellow Bernard Knox. ☐

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[28] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon*, translated by Ellen Frothingame (Noonday Press, 1957), pp. 10–11.

[29] Jacob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1962), Vol. 1, p. 285. Camille Paglia is a "classicist" when she indicts modern students of Greek homosexuality as neo-Burckhardts: "With Winkler, you start to get a slumming feeling: go to the capitol [in Athens?], go to the whorehouse—what's the difference?" (*Sex, Art, and American Culture*, p. 200).

[30] W.H. Auden, *Forewords and Afterwords*, selected by Edward Mendelson (Vintage, 1989), p. 8.

[31] James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom* (Knopf, 1990), pp. xi–xii.

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The Lost Kingdom of Orson Welles

Joseph McBride

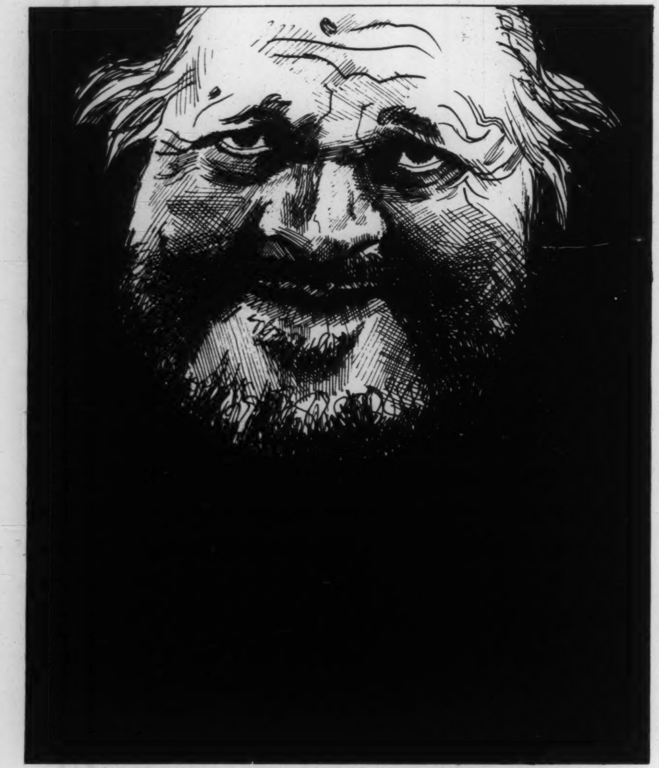
This Is Orson Welles
by Orson Welles and
Peter Bogdanovich,
edited by Jonathan Rosenbaum.
HarperCollins, 533 pp., $30.00

This Is Orson Welles (audio tapes)
conversations between Welles and
Bogdanovich, edited by
Jonathan Rosenbaum.
Caedmon, 4 hrs., $25.00

The Cradle Will Rock
a screenplay by Orson Welles,
edited by James Pepper.
Santa Teresa Press (to be published
in August)

The Magnificent Ambersons:
A Reconstruction
by Robert L. Carringer.
University of California Press,
307 pp., $30.00

> "A certain great and powerful king once asked a poet, 'What can I give you of all that I have?' He wisely replied, 'Anything, sir... except your secret.'"
>
> —Orson Welles,
> epigraph to *Mr. Arkadin*



One of Orson Welles's best stories, though not one of his best films, *Mr. Arkadin* (1955) tells of an aging tycoon of mysterious origins who becomes terminally anxious that the guilty secrets of his past will come to light. He hires a venal adventurer to seek out the people who still remember the truth—and then has them systematically killed. When it becomes clear that the scheme has failed and the truth has been unmasked, Arkadin kills himself by jumping from his plane, vanishing (literally) into thin air.

Though filmed in Welles's most grandiloquently baroque manner and studded with dazzling performances from such character actors as Akim Tamiroff, Katina Paxinou, and Michael Redgrave, *Mr. Arkadin* falls far short of *Citizen Kane* as a meditation on biography, not only because of wholesale reworking by other hands ("More completely than any other picture of mine has been hurt by anybody, *Arkadin* was destroyed," Welles told his biographer Barbara Leaming), but also because of its curiously indifferent portrayals of the two central characters. Hiding behind egregiously phony beard and makeup as Gregory Arkadin, Welles seems determined to keep him as hollow and insubstantial as possible, a symbol rather than a human being, as if illustrating too literally Jorge Luis Borges's description of *Citizen Kane*: "a centerless labyrinth." Welles allows Robert Arden to play Guy Van Stratten, Arkadin's researcher, as an utter fool, devoid of any but the most self-serving motives. Arkadin's contempt for Van Stratten is matched by that of the director, who displays wrath at those who dare to reveal the darkest secrets of others, even if they've been invited to do so. The emotional "No Trespassing" sign Welles erected in *Arkadin* helps to explain why he was so skittish about having his own life probed by interviewers, and why he never managed to write a full-fledged autobiography.

Nearly twenty-five years ago, Peter Bogdanovich, then a young film journalist and budding director with one undeservedly obscure B-movie (*Targets*) to his name, was invited by Welles to interview him for "a nice little book" intended to "set the record straight" about his life and work. It was a chance to explore and understand the mysteries of a film maker long absent from the American scene, a man whose life had become as quasi-mythical as those of his protagonists. But Bogdanovich found that the unexpectedly lengthy and contentious process took on unsettling resemblances to *Mr. Arkadin*: "There were times when I seemed to play a variation of Van Stratten to Welles' personal version of Arkadin, because during our talks (on or off the record), he would get particularly agitated and annoyed about connections made between his work and his own life." Their fragmentary but fascinating interviews, edited by Jonathan Rosenbaum and now belatedly (*very* belatedly) published as *This Is Orson Welles*, follow the jigsaw-puzzle method that Welles favored in approaching the mysteries of a great man's life, but they reveal as much about Welles's stubborn resistance to the autobiographical impulse as they do about the man and his films.

During the seven years in which these interviews were conducted and in the remaining years of his life, Welles was seen by the public mostly in embarrassingly silly television appearances, trading quips with Johnny Carson, clowning with Dean Martin, doing magic tricks for Merv Griffin, and serving as a commercial pitchman who vowed to "sell no wine before its time." Even as his youthful triumph with *Citizen Kane* became the subject of increasing reverence, the living Orson Welles became a national mockery: the butt of Carson's fat jokes and, even more damagingly, the object of condescension from those who felt that he was "wasting his talent."

Made with virtually unprecedented artistic freedom when Welles was only twenty-five, *Kane* became both his glory and his curse: everything after it couldn't help seeming like an anticlimax, no matter what else he achieved. In retrospect, all of Welles's later problems could be traced back to their roots in that too-early success, the unrealistic expectations it raised, and the virulent reaction against it by Hearst and Hollywood. *Kane* barely escaped being burned to placate the powerful publisher who served as the partial model for its central character, and though the film was a critical sensation, RKO had trouble finding theaters willing to play it. "Nobody would book it—they were scared," Welles recalled.

Welles's second feature, his adaptation of Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons*, might have surpassed the artistic achievement of *Kane* if it had not been mutilated by the panicky and increasingly hostile studio following a disastrous preview in Pomona. This Midwestern equivalent of Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*—a somber tale of a city that "befouled itself and darkened its sky" with the coming of the automobile—had the misfortune to be released when audiences were flocking to sunny fare as an escape from the dark headlines of World War II. After being cut by forty-three minutes and partially reshot, *Ambersons* was dumped onto the market on a double bill with the Lupe Velez comedy *Mexican Spitfire Sees a Ghost*, and was pulled from distribution hastily despite promising box-office results in several key cities. Bogdanovich has described its cutting as "the greatest artistic tragedy in the movies," and Welles lamented, "They destroyed *Ambersons*, and the picture itself destroyed me."

Welles was recalled from South America, where he was in the midst of shooting a goodwill documentary for RKO and the US government, *It's All True*. With that film forcibly taken from him and abandoned, he was stripped of his studio contract and sent on the road for a lifetime as what he called "a migratory worker. I go where the jobs are, like a cherry picker.... I had luck as no one had. Afterwards, I had the worst bad luck in the history of the cinema, but that is in the order of things: I had to pay for having had the best luck in the history of the cinema."

The major achievements with which Welles followed *Kane* and *Ambersons* also tended to fall into the category of *film maudit*—whether because of bizarre filming difficulties (*Othello*, recently "restored" in a crisp new print but with its music and dialogue altered in ways that would have appalled the director); reworking and contemptuous burial by the front office (*Touch of Evil*, which can be seen in a longer version containing more of Welles's footage as well as more scenes interpolated by a studio hack director); or because of repeated attacks by the *New York Times*'s reviewer Bosley Crowther, who almost singlehandedly scared off US exhibitors (*Chimes at Midnight*, which the philistine pundit called "a confusing patchwork of scenes and characters" with a "fuzzy and incomprehensible" soundtrack).

Chimes at Midnight (1966) is based on Shakespeare's cycle of plays about King Henry IV, Prince Hal (later Henry V), and Hal's corpulent boon companion, Sir John Falstaff, whom Welles called "one of the only great characters in all dramatic literature who is essentially *good*." Anticipating his own end, Falstaff tells Hal with urgent warmth, "[B]anish plump Jack, and banish all the world!" I've always felt that line—indeed, Welles's whole glorious performance as Falstaff—was Welles's own passionate rebuff to those who used his girth to belittle him. Not only was Falstaff a character Welles was born to play, but *Chimes* was a film he had spent much of his life preparing to direct. He first played Falstaff when he was a boy, at the Todd School in Woodstock, Illinois; at the age of twenty-three, he played the role again in his 1939 Theatre Guild/Mercury Theater condensation of several of Shakespeare's history plays, *Five Kings*. Telescoping and editing Shakespeare further for his and Hilton Edwards's 1960 Belfast and Dublin stage production titled *Chimes at Midnight*, and finally for the film version, Welles sharpened his focus on the larger-than-life figure of Falstaff and on the themes that concerned him most. He poured into the rich, melancholy story a lifetime of thoughts and feelings about such profound matters as old age and mortality, the betrayal of love and friendship, and the true meaning of honor, fatherhood, and kingly responsibility.

For all its virtuosity, and even while performing the rare feat of believably conjuring up a long-vanished world, *Chimes* resolutely avoids "technical surprises or shocks," Welles said, because "everything of importance in the film should be found on the faces." In *Chimes at Midnight*, as in the similarly elegiac *The Magnificent Ambersons*, Welles's usually dominant camera remains the servant of his characters: for as he remarked, "There is a more personal feeling in those films, a deeper emotion."

The first time I saw *Chimes* was on the last night of its three-day run in Chicago in 1967; the theater was scheduled to turn into a soft-core porno house the following day, so I sat through it three times that night, not knowing when I would ever be able to see again the film I considered (and still do) Welles's masterpiece. I remember how the grizzled old winos who made up much of the audience reveled in Falstaff's humor, not fazed by the Elizabethan language; if Welles's film could please these groundlings, it could have pleased anybody, I felt at the time, but it was not to be. Welles's last chance for popular success had passed, and his career would be increasingly marginal from that time forward, despite his valiant efforts to reclaim his reputation. What I wrote of Welles's Falstaff in 1969 could be applied to Welles himself:

> He has none of Kane's guile and worldly ability, and his greatness presents itself as a monstrous jest impossible to ignore but easy to dismiss. He demands nothing but attention, and offers all of himself in return. His egocentricity, like his body, is carried past the ridiculous into the sublime, to the point of melancholia. He fears nothing but death, and reproaches Doll Tearsheet with, "Thou'lt forget me when I am gone." It is unlikely that Welles as director or actor will achieve again so moving a scene as that of Falstaff's expulsion. With the author's consent we may feel superior to Kane, but we are never superior to Falstaff. He is naked before us. *Chimes at Midnight* is Welles's testament.[1]

The only two theatrical films Welles managed to complete in the last seventeen years of his life, *F for Fake* (1973) and *Filming "Othello"* (1979), were delightful intellectual divertissements, but since they fell into the hard-to-book category of "film essays," they barely left a trace in this country. Most of Welles's creative energies in his later years were invested in shooting an ambitious film that hasn't (yet) reached the screen, *The Other Side of the Wind*, writing scripts that never made it before the camera, and trying to raise completion money from people who feared his largely undeserved reputation as a wastrel. That reputation, I can't help thinking, stemmed as much from his corpulence as from his track record as a director; if you're a maverick film maker weighing close to four hundred pounds and constantly in need of money, people are going to assume (however irrationally) that you've been gobbling up the equivalent of a movie each year.

In fact, despite his occasional budget overruns, Welles was a remarkably economical director who invested much of his own money into his work and performed cinematic miracles with modest resources. He proudly told me he used only 180 extras for the Battle of Shrewsbury sequence in *Chimes at Midnight*, an overwhelming distillation of the horrors of war into a percussively edited five-minute montage, which moves from the glorious spectacle of charging knights to the ignominious agony of hand to hand combat in the muddy battleground. Welles's entire body of work no doubt cost less than one of today's monstrously budgeted extravaganzas. The real problem with Welles was that though he functioned in a popular art form he was not the sort of ambidextrous popular artist who, as he once said of John Huston, "can make a masterpiece or turn you out a blockbuster—or *both*."

In the view of the critic and biographer Charles Higham, whose books on Welles are riddled with factual errors and reductive judgments, Welles's problems in later years all boiled down to a crippling "fear of completion." It is a facile explanation that leaves out much in the way of historical and cultural context but nevertheless contains a germ of truth. After returning to Hollywood feature film directing for the first time in nearly a decade, hoping to exorcise the RKO experience, Welles was lastingly traumatized by Universal's takeover of *Touch of Evil* (1958) and his dismissal from the final stages of cutting while the studio tried to reduce the complexity of his unorthodox style.[2] He never directed another Hollywood studio film, and resisted some of the occasional offers that came his way to do so, while others he didn't resist never came to fruition; he told me in 1971 that he had turned down a chance to make a studio film in the late Sixties because he knew he no longer could get up at six

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[1] From my 1972 book *Orson Welles* (Viking Press).

[2] A lengthy excerpt from Welles's fifty-eight-page memorandum about the cutting to Universal studio chief Edward Muhl, once planned for inclusion in *This Is Orson Welles*, appeared in the Fall 1992 issue of *Film Quarterly*. Welles's eloquent blend of diplomatic cajolery and sarcasm in arguing for his "jealous sentiments of ownership" is heartbreaking to read: "That I was denied even the right of consultation with you is a hard fact strongly hinting that, of all people, I must be the least welcome as a critic. In spite of this—and in fairness to a picture which you now describe as 'exceptionally entertaining'—I must ask that you open your mind for a moment to this opinion from the man who, after all, made the picture." Muhl turned a deaf ear to many of the suggestions made by Welles in the memo.

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Jerome Silbergeld
with Gong Jisui

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The open letter below was originally submitted as a paid advertisement to Contemporary Psychology and American Psychologist, two journals published by the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA refused to run the ads because they don't generally run open letters that are about controversial issues in the field. Because we believe that the issues addressed in the open letter (as well as its rejection by the APA) are of interest to people concerned with the preservation of civil liberties, we think it is important for readers of the New York Review of Books *to be informed about this controversy.*

An Open Letter to the American Psychological Association:

As members of the American Psychological Association and other professionals who work in the fields of psychology, education and social work, we wish to express our concern regarding a review in the February 1993 issue of *Contemporary Psychology*.

Benjamin Harris (an advisory editor of *CP* and the acting chair of the Psychology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside) has written a "review" of *The Myth of Psychology* by Fred Newman which is in fact not a review at all. It contains virtually no discussion of the book's contents nor any critical examination of the author's central thesis. Harris instead focused his remarks on the author's political affiliations and institutional location. His review is an overt political attack, apparently designed to warn away any potential readers of *The Myth of Psychology*.

Such a departure from *CP*'s usual style -- and indeed from the accepted style of academic reviews in general -- is most disturbing. We wonder whether the fact that *The Myth of Psychology* openly challenges the dominant paradigm elicited Professor Harris' attack. Or does it signal a new policy on the part of the APA and/or *Contemporary Psychology*, in which reviewers identify the political affiliations of authors and judge their work accordingly on the grounds that such information is relevant in assessing scientific validity? We hope not.

We, the undersigned, believe strongly in the importance of being open to new ideas and approaches in the field and in maintaining ethically and scientifically sound standards of critique. We call upon those who set the policy of *CP* to act accordingly.

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*For identification purposes only.

o'clock every morning. That sounds flippant, but the fact was that Welles was temperamentally unable to work on an assembly line. As a member of the ensemble cast of *The Other Side of the Wind* throughout its five years of production (1970–1975), I saw firsthand that he preferred to work on his own schedule, as only Chaplin before him was able to do, because Chaplin also invested his own money in his films: Welles took days off when he felt like it, to think about the next scenes or simply to nap and gather his energies—and then he'd wear out his young crews by working eighteen hours straight, day after day, night after night, until *they* dropped or rebelled.

Welles's reputation for not completing films had begun with his ill-fated departure for Brazil in early 1942 to make *It's All True*, leaving the post-production of *Ambersons* in the hands of subordinates who proved unable or unwilling to stand up to studio pressure. Although Welles unquestionably bears a large share of the responsibility for what happened in his absence, it is simplistic to blame the *Ambersons* debacle primarily on his self-destructive tendencies, as Robert L. Carringer does in his new book *The Magnificent Ambersons: A Reconstruction* (University of California Press).[3] Carringer, like Higham before him, downplays the combined effect of the inhospitable wartime mood and the other powerful factors that were operating against *Ambersons*: Welles's feeling of patriotic obligation to make *It's All True* because of his draft-deferred status; his simultaneous conflicts with RKO over that film; a disruptive change of studio administrations; and the studio's reneging on promises to keep him involved in the cutting of *Ambersons* by long distance, even though he had surrendered the right of final cut in his contract.

It's All True, a three-part film about peasant life, had to be hastily started in time for the Rio Carnival, and experienced a myriad of production calamities on the far-flung locations, including the death of a leading cast member when a raft capsized. Welles was blamed, unfairly or not, for most of what went wrong. But RKO's displeasure with *Ambersons* and with *It's All True*'s sympathetic treatment of impoverished blacks also contributed to its decision to pull the plug on the offbeat film: the studio's unit production manager, Lynn Shores, complained that Welles's "continued exploitation of the negro [*sic*] and the low-class element in and around Rio" was "in very bad taste." Welles told Bogdanovich that an RKO executive watching the Carnival rushes described the footage as "a lot of jigaboos jumping up and down."

Hollywood always looked askance at Welles after that, occasionally tossing him an offbeat crime thriller to direct (*The Stranger*, *The Lady from Shanghai*, *Touch of Evil*), but greenlighting only one of his pet projects (*Macbeth*, filmed with panache as a Republic quickie), while giving him more frequent employment as a prematurely aged, glowering character actor. His many years in European exile after the late 1940s saw him, out of necessity, embracing what François Truffaut called "his position as an avant-garde director," evolving a looser, even more daringly idiosyncratic style in such films as *Othello*, *Mr. Arkadin*, *The Trial*, and *Chimes at Midnight*, breaking out of studio sets into expressionistically transformed natural surroundings and relying more on elaborate sleight-of-hand montage than on the long takes he favored at RKO. While his output abroad was intermittent, his difficulties completing films did not become chronic until his later years, when old stories about his youthful misadventures scared away potential investors and the films he did start shooting often were bedeviled with financial and legal problems, some of his own making, since he was never a good businessman.

The Magnificent Ambersons, *1942*

Photograph courtesy of Photofest

But whatever anxiety Welles undoubtedly felt about his career, no "fear of completion" or surrender to feelings of victimization stopped him from continuing to shoot film until the very day of his death, while continually pouring into his work the money he earned by making himself a figure of ridicule on TV shows, in other people's movies, and in even more demeaning commercial appearances. He paid a high price in public derision for his tenacity in continuing to make his own mostly unseen movies: the jokes gradually became conventional journalistic wisdom.

Anyone under the illusion that Welles was slothful or creatively dormant at any time of his life should start by browsing through *This Is Orson Welles*'s exhaustive, and exhausting, 131-page chronology of Welles's career, which takes the reader almost day-by-day from 1918, when the subject was three ("Makes his stage debut as walk-on in *Samson and Delilah* at the Chicago Opera"), to October 10, 1985, when he was seventy ("OW dies of a heart attack early in the morning at his house in Hollywood while typing stage directions for the material he plans to shoot with [his cameraman, Gary Graver] at UCLA later today"). The vast body of work listed in films, TV, theater, radio, recordings, journalism, literature, and other fields would be enough for several normal lifetimes. To Welles's great credit, his work is so varied that it can't be categorized, and if he had been allowed to make some of his unmade film projects, it would have been even more impossible to pigeonhole him; yet that gloriously unpredictable diversity also made his work less accessible to the mass audience, by preventing the emergence of a "typical Orson Welles movie" to compete with the typical Alfred Hitchcock, Frank Capra, or John Ford movie.

Those of us who have written about Welles have only begun to describe the full richness of his career, in part because his career still is not finished. Much of Welles's late work was left uncompleted when he died—notably *The Other Side of the Wind*, his satirical meditation on film making and machismo, with John Huston playing an aging, Hemingwayesque director. Welles managed to put together only a partial rough cut of the film before he died, but he did shoot virtually all the footage he needed, aside from a few insert shots. I remember Welles once directing me to look down and turn my head slowly from right to left as I spoke my lines in one scene. "Why?" I asked. "Because you're looking at midgets!" he bellowed. "Where are the midgets?" "*I'm going to shoot them later!*" He never did shoot those inserts, but I believe he meant to, because I once found 8x10 glossies of midget actors strewn around Bogdanovich's house when we were filming there.

Like the unfinished Welles movies—which also include a thriller called *The Deep* and a shortened version of *The Merchant of Venice*, as well as his decades-in-the-works adaptation of *Don Quixote*[4]—*This Is Orson Welles*, based on Bogdanovich's interviews with Welles between 1968 and 1975, has had a checkered, somewhat mysterious past. The book was put aside after Welles decided he wanted to write his memoirs first (he never wrote more than a few pages before he died), and it seemed destined to be buried, like Rosebud, in some dusty warehouse before being tossed in the fire after Welles's death because of an unpaid storage bill. "I thought from the mid-Seventies that we'd never see it," Bogdanovich told me recently. "It was Orson's idea to do it, Orson's idea how to do it, and his idea not to publish it, so I couldn't really argue."

For such a notorious egoist, Welles showed a surprising resistance to the confessional genre of literature, going

But Tamiroff's bountiful embodiment of the earthy Sancho is the per-only so far in the field of formal autobiography as to produce haunting fragments for the French *Vogue*'s Christmas 1982 issue. Those reminiscences of his mother and father, suffused with equal amounts of wonderment and gloom, have the tantalizing effect of a door being briefly cracked open onto the darkest recesses of Welles's psyche, and then as quickly being closed. The seriocomic word-picture of his father, eccentric inventor and *bon vivant* Richard Welles, ends with a startling and mysterious *coup de théâtre*: Welles confesses that as a boy he was "convinced—as I am now—that I had killed my father. (I'll try to write about this later.)"

---

[3] I made the first attempt at a reconstruction of *Ambersons*, using the final shooting script, in my books *Persistence of Vision: A Collection of Film Criticism* (1968) and *Orson Welles*. The studio cutting continuity served as the basis for Carringer's complete transcription of the original 131-minute Welles version of the film, and for *This Is Orson Welles*'s thirty-six-page appendix reconstructing the missing scenes. Bogdanovich and Rosenbaum convey a more vivid sense of the lost footage than Carringer does, with the help of frame enlargements (preserved by Welles) to which Carringer apparently lacked access. Unfortunately, the frame enlargement of the original version's haunting final shot, which Bogdanovich showed me in 1970, remains unpublished: Joseph Cotten driving away from Agnes Moorehead's boardinghouse, his automobile overshadowed by the modern city's polluted skyline.

[4] A version of *Don Quixote* assembled by Jess Franco and first shown last year in Spain at Expo 92 suffers from the film's erratic production and post-production history. The print quality is highly variable, the editing (only partly by Welles) is often ragged and indulgent, some important scenes are missing, and the soundtrack of the English-language version is an off-putting mélange of dubbed voices. Since the actors playing Don Quixote and Sancho Panza (Francisco Reiguera and Akim Tamiroff) both died before Welles could finish the film, their voices had to be supplied by the director and other actors. Even if Welles had finished it, his sometimes inspired, sometimes slapdash *Quixote* clearly would not have been the masterwork we might have hoped it would be.

With such a topic looming on the horizon, it's little wonder Welles resisted the autobiographical impulse his admirers and vicissitudes of fortune might otherwise have dictated. The sheer volume of the reminiscences he gave to Barbara Leaming for her 1985 *Orson Welles: A Biography*—which the subject was promoting with the author in his last TV appearance on *The Merv Griffin Show* the night before his death—seems to have overwhelmed Leaming, who uncritically adopted his point of view throughout. Welles's apparent generosity was, in fact, a smokescreen to keep Leaming (or a less malleable biographer) from probing more deeply. "I think there is a movie in the story of somebody who's getting a biography written about him," Welles told her. "I think finally the biographer comes with a pistol and shoots the subject." Leaming's entertaining but mostly superficial book may have been all Welles thought he owed the public, but it left the reader yearning for something more substantial.

"It somehow seems fitting that in order to piece together Orson Welles's autobiography, we have to turn to his creative work," Jonathan Rosenbaum notes in his afterword to the unfilmed Welles screenplay *The Cradle Will Rock*, scheduled for publication later this year by Santa Teresa Press, a small company in Santa Barbara, California, which brought out another unproduced script from Welles's later years, *The Big Brass Ring*, in 1987.[5] Similar in tone to the nostalgic reminiscences contained in *F for Fake* and *Filming "Othello,"* the *Cradle* script (written in 1984) gives Welles's account of his youthful adventures in 1937 while staging Marc Blitzstein's labor opera. A landmark theatrical event that brought Welles and the WPA's Federal Theater into fateful conflict with anti–New Deal reactionaries, the guerrilla production of *Cradle* in defiance of a government lockout helped hasten the end of the WPA's experiment with a people's theater.

Looking back in a mellow, generous, often self-critical mood, Welles pokes fun at his own self-absorbed flamboyance at a time when, according to the screenplay, he was gripped more by the sheer theatrical kick of confronting the establishment than by Blitzstein's political message, which by the 1980s he considered dated. At the time of the production, however, he said he had been "waiting for a good worker's play; *The Cradle Will Rock* is just that, offering a tale that is ideologically sound and a perfect fusion of music and drama." Welles's ambivalent attempts in the screenplay to put distance between himself and Blitzstein's agitprop don't always convince, however, and may reflect a residual anxiety over the political persecution he subsequently suffered for his own leftism at the hands of the FBI, William Randolph Hearst, the blacklist era publication *Red Channels*, and their cohorts, a pressure that no doubt contributed to his exile from America during the McCarthy era.[6]

This Is Orson Welles, despite its large and incidental pleasures, doesn't live up to the all-embracing autobiographical promise of its title. It's too loosely structured and too concentrated on film making to be entirely satisfying as a substitute autobiography of a man with such a multi-faceted personality. Welles imposed the book's free-associating organizing principle, and Rosenbaum's editing sometimes seems weighed down by the disorderliness of the material. But given the subject's brilliance as a raconteur it probably would have been foolish to stop him from following his own conversational course in order to rearrange the book into a tidy chronological package. "I like digressions, don't you?" Welles remarks while discussing a joke cut by RKO from *The Magnificent Ambersons*. "Look at Gogol. Read the first few pages of *Dead Souls* again and you'll see how one mad little digression can give reverberation and density to ordinary narrative."

The digressions into subjects that relate only tangentially (or not at all) to film making—*The War of the Worlds*, comic books, FDR—or Welles's ruminations on such diverse literary sources as Shakespeare, Tarkington, and Bram Stoker are so enthralling that one wishes for more, not less, of such asides, drawing from other aspects of Welles's personality. Such as his comment on why he was happiest as an actor on radio: "It's as close as

formance of his lifetime, and the cadaverous Reiguera looks like a Gustave Doré illustration of Quixote sprung magically to life. Welles's adventurous visual style mixes formal compositions reminiscent of John Ford and El Greco with playful *Nouvelle Vague*-ish scenes of Don and Sancho wandering bemusedly through the alien landscape of Franco's Spain. Sancho even meets up with Welles and becomes an extra in the film we are watching, but Quixote rails against the tools of film making as "demonic instruments" and rides off disgustedly for the Moon, the last frontier, where "there may still be room for knight errantry." Welles's *Quixote* is his wry, melancholic valentine to Cervantes's blinkered visionary, whom the film maker loves for fighting wrongs with "so much heart and so few means," and to the Don's profoundly human squire, "a personality marvelous even in his stupidity."

---

[5] See Gore Vidal's review, *New York Review*, June 1, 1989.

[6] At one point in *This Is Orson Welles*, Welles sarcastically compares Bogdanovich's research files to the files of J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, which, as has been revealed by James Naremore (author of the critical study *The Magic World of Orson Welles*), include 189 pages of reports and clippings gathered by the Bureau between 1941 and 1956 on Welles and his political views ("The Trial: The FBI vs. Orson Welles," *Film Comment*, January–February 1991).

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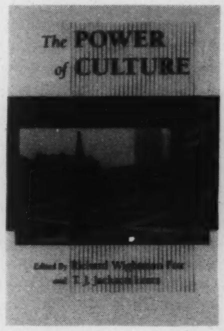

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you can get, and still get paid for it, to the great, private joy of singing in the bathtub. The microphone's a friend, you know. The camera's a critic." Or his reflection on history:

> This hand that touches you now once touched the hand of Sarah Bernhardt—can you imagine that?... When she was young, Mademoiselle Bernhardt had taken the hand of Madame George, who had been the mistress of *Napoleon!*... Peter—*just three handshakes from Napoleon!* It's not that the world is so small, but that history is so short. Four or five very old men could join hands and take you right back to Shakespeare.

The virtue of the book's rambling style is that it allows the reader the opportunity of eavesdropping for a few hours on a great conversationalist. In the four-hour companion package of audio tapes, the pleasure can be savored even more palpably. Welles's magisterial baritone and his great convulsing, Falstaffian laugh, accompanied by the intimate sounds of his match lighting a cigar and ice cubes clinking in his glass of Scotch, are preserved in these highlights from their conversations. After the tapes were transcribed, Bogdanovich edited them, added contextual material from production memoranda and other documents, and sent each chapter to Welles,

> typed as he had requested, the left side of the page blank for him to rewrite. Eventually, a few months later, a chapter would come back, thoroughly revised, heavily rewritten at times (including some of my own remarks). I understood Orson occasionally altered things for dramatic purposes, and if it was good for the "cause" to have me a little more gauche or pushy, why would it matter?

Welles shaped the book in much the same way he edited his films: Welles's film footage, as Truffaut once put it, was "shot by an exhibitionist and edited by a censor," attaining an intensified musical intricacy and dialectical tension in the process. The book's careful reshaping from the more spontaneous raw material not only gives the illusion of a free-flowing conversation but also allows Welles to skip over or obfuscate topics he doesn't want to explore more fully or precisely.

Welles's often merciless ragging of Bogdanovich—a very good sport and cheerful masochist—served as a sort of rough draft for the film that was germinating in Welles's mind at the time these interviews began and whose start of production, as the tapes reveal, was triggered by something Bogdanovich said to Welles about Hollywood's neglect of old directors. *The Other Side of the Wind* is centered around a birthday party for the legendary director played by John Huston, and it mocks and decries the interview process by which overly possessive film buffs, in Welles's view, simultaneously worship and assault their idols. When the film started shooting, Bogdanovich and I were cast as a pair of fatuous interviewers (Charles Higgam [*sic*] and Mr. Pister) who follow Huston's Jake Hannaford around, peppering him with incessant questions. During one scene in Hannaford's car, I ask him, "In the body of your film work, how would you relate the trauma of your father's suicide?"—and get thrown out of the car in retaliation.

When Bogdanovich became a celebrated director himself with *The Last Picture Show* in 1971, he helped Welles with the independent production of *The Other Side of the Wind*, even letting him live at his Bel Air mansion and shoot parts of the film there when Bogdanovich was in Europe making *Daisy Miller*. But the tensions between him and Welles increased considerably, especially after Bogdanovich tried and failed to find Welles a directing job in the Hollywood studios. Welles recast Bogdanovich in *The Other Side of the Wind* as a Prince Hal–like director and left me with most of the arcane and intrusive film-buff questions.

Orson Welles and Keith Baxter in Chimes at Midnight, *1966*

Photograph courtesy of Photofest

Welles's resentment of what he saw as the curse of overly intellectualized probing of the artist's mind comes across throughout the Bogdanovich interviews. "He felt like certain comics do, that if you have to explain a joke, it must be bad," Bogdanovich reports. When Bogdanovich prods him to verbalize "the meaning of the exchange of looks [among] Prince Hal and the king and Falstaff over Percy's body"—one of the most beautiful, purely visual scenes in *Chimes at Midnight*—Welles replies with exasperation, "If that isn't clear, it speaks pretty badly for me." He repeatedly mocks Bogdanovich for asking "one of those searching, penetrating questions I thought we'd avoid," and admits, "The whole purpose of a book like this is what I quarrel with." When Bogdanovich tries "to argue about your impatience with the search for themes," Welles responds, "Luckily, we know almost nothing about Shakespeare and very little about Cervantes. And that makes it so much easier to understand their works.... It's an egocentric, romantic, nineteenth-century conception that the artist is more interesting and more important than his art."

But Bogdanovich was unrelenting in his quest for connections between Welles's inner life and his work.

> *Bogdanovich*: Why did you decide to begin *Othello* with the funeral?
>
> *Welles*: Why not? [*Laughs*] I don't know. Have another drink.
>
> *PB*: Well, it couldn't be coincidental that *Kane*, *Othello*, and *Mr. Arkadin* all begin with the death of the leading character....
>
> *OW*: Just shows a certain weakness of invention on the part of the filmmaker.
>
> *PB*: You can give me a better answer than that.
>
> *OW*: Peter, I'm no good at this sort of stuff. I either go cryptic or philistine.

Of course, Welles doth protest too much, for no film maker was ever more articulate, or less of a philistine: When he turned his mind to it, as he did much of his time with Bogdanovich, Welles could give the kind of interview that justifies the existence of the process. A powerful example: when Bogdanovich made Welles "so sick, I couldn't sleep" by telling him about John Ford and the other old directors who couldn't find work in the "with-it" Hollywood of the late 1960s—the discussion that led Welles to start filming *The Other Side of the Wind*—Welles exploded: "It's so *awful*. I think it's just terrible what happens to old people. But the public isn't interested in that—never has been. That's why *Lear* has always been a play people hate."

"You don't think Lear became senile?" asks Bogdanovich, and Welles responds,

> He became senile by giving *power* away. The only thing that keeps people alive in their old age is power.... But take power away from de Gaulle or Churchill or Tito or Mao or Ho or any of these old men who run the world—in this world that belongs only to young people—and you'll see a "babbling, slippered pantaloon."
>
> It's only in your twenties and in your seventies and eighties that you do the greatest work. The

> enemy of society is the middle class, and the enemy of life is middle age. Youth and old age are great times—and we must treasure old age and give genius the capacity to function in old age—and not send them away....

Such moments of unguarded passion are all too rare in *This Is Orson Welles*. Some of Welles's sparring exchanges with Bogdanovich are wry and revealing—especially the running joke about Bogdanovich deviously steering the protesting Welles back to the painful (to him) subject of *Citizen Kane*—but more often we share the interviewer's frustration over Welles's reticence, which ultimately becomes exasperating. Reading this book helps us to understand why Welles never was able to complete a conventional autobiography. His participation in this enterprise seems half-hearted; he sits for a lengthy session of analysis but displays an almost neurotic aversion to introspection, evidently stemming from the fear of having to share his deepest feelings to the public, or from a self-protective need to portray himself as a "centerless labyrinth."

Welles's films show some of the same ambivalence toward the necessary process of artistic self-revelation; the twin roles of exhibitionist and censor always vied for his attention. Despite his reputation as a ham, which stemmed in part from the inescapable largeness of his body and voice, Welles never seemed entirely comfortable as an actor, and (especially in later years) he accepted parts mainly to make money to finance his directing ventures. He frequently seemed studied, guarded, and stiff on screen, taking refuge behind theatrical floridity and tongue-in-cheek jocularity. He worried that he seldom "really felt" what he was playing, and he almost never (except as Harry Lime in *The Third Man*) appeared on screen without a false nose and other makeup to transform his appearance. He tells Bogdanovich, "I read once—Norman Mailer wrote something or other—that, when I was young, I was the most beautiful man anybody had ever seen. Yes! Made up for *Citizen Kane*!" Hiding his naked face was a lifelong obsession for Welles, as if he had a terrible secret to hide, something shameful to cover up—something for which his face was his actor's metaphor. He used makeup as "camouflage" to fend off invasion of his emotional privacy, just as, at the age of ten, he scared off bullies at Washington Grade School in Madison, Wisconsin, by carrying his makeup kit to school and making himself up with a bloody face.

In the films he directed, Welles typically played emotionally barricaded, self-disguising characters whose moral makeup was far removed from his own, or whose flaws exaggerated his own more pardonable vices and failings for dramatic effect. He hid behind the grotesque corpulence of the corrupt cop Hank Quinlan in *Touch of Evil*, the waxen face and walrus mustache of the moribund Macao merchant Mr. Clay in *The Immortal Story*, or the protean features of Charles Foster Kane, revealing his feelings about their moral dilemmas less through his acting than through his intricately rhetorical and frequently ironic camerawork, giving himself a dual presence in the films. Rarely did he allow himself to express a naked emotion on screen through his acting alone, although when he did so as Falstaff, in the great rejection scene when Prince Hal/King Henry V (Keith Baxter) says, "I know thee not, old man"—a scene devastating in its simplicity—it became the defining moment of his career.

Bogdanovich recalls the "strangely conspiratorial quality Orson and I fell into almost at once," and it was the younger man's ability to discern the areas of greatest emotional vulnerability in Welles that made Welles try to retreat so vehemently from the revelations demanded of him. "Orson had been burned in so many places in his emotional and personal life, he was afraid of being hurt again," Bogdanovich realized. "He preferred to talk about something new, something that wasn't in the past, something that was possible to change."

Bogdanovich's patient wheedling, his willingness to put up with so much mockery, and his thorough grounding in Welles's work counterbalance his limitations as an interviewer, which are most glaringly seen in his lack of awareness of the sociopolitical aspects of Welles's work: of *Ambersons*, he confesses to Welles, "You know, it wasn't until about the fourth or fifth time I'd seen the picture that I saw any social points." But Bogdanovich's tenacious cajoling of his recalcitrant subject arose from a fervent curiosity about Welles which wouldn't take "no comment" for an answer.

"No, Peter, I have no 'Rosebuds,'" Welles insists when Bogdanovich probes into Welles's cinematic reflections of his relationship with his mother, whose death when he was nine caused him lifelong emotional devastation. But that line triggers the book's most moving personal reminiscence, about the young Orson's stays with his father, who in his later years owned a hotel in Grand Detour, Illinois, which he operated as a retreat for his friends:

> Well, where I do see some kind of "Rosebud," perhaps, is in that world of Grand Detour. A childhood there was like a childhood back in the 1870s. No electric light, horse-drawn buggies—a completely anachronistic, old-fashioned, early-Tarkington, rural kind of life, with a country store that had above it a ballroom with an old dance floor with springs in it, so that folks would feel light on their feet. When I was little, nobody had danced up there for many years, but I used to sneak up at night and dance by moonlight with the dust rising from the floor.... Grand Detour was one of those lost worlds, one of those Edens that you get thrown out of.... I feel as though I've had a childhood in the last century from those short summers.

Welles's reverie about this "marvelous little corner in time," his own personal Twilight Zone—which he readily concedes found lasting resonance in *Ambersons* and his other work—comes to a painfully abrupt end when his memory inevitably turns to the fire that destroyed his father's hotel not long before Richard Welles's

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death in 1930. "Can I go now?" Welles asks Bogdanovich, and you can hear the childish plaintiveness in his voice as the chapter closes.

Strikingly similar in mood to the autobiographical fragments about his childhood in French *Vogue*, this story shows what we lost when Welles found that he couldn't write a book about his life. In bringing the Grand Detour story to an elliptical conclusion, Welles barely elaborates on what his solitary dance in the moonlight meant to him, although we can take that dance as an image for the odd, lonely childhood that shaped him as an artist and to which he kept retreating symbolically for his cinematic "lost Edens"—as geographically disparate as Mrs. Kane's Colorado boardinghouse, the Ambersons' Indianapolis mansion, Don Quixote's Spain, Falstaff's medieval England. Perhaps Welles never allowed us closer to his "secret" than he did in his mysterious reference to his responsibility for his father's death, which may have been a prototype for the betrayals of close friends and flawed father figures in his films.

Although Richard Welles's death certificate says he died of natural causes (chronic heart and kidney disease) in a Chicago hotel, Higham's 1985 biography *Orson Welles: The Rise and Fall of an American Genius* and Frank Brady's *Citizen Welles* (1989) report that the elder Welles may have been a suicide. According to Barbara Leaming, "the young Orson told people that he was present at his father's suicide," but she thinks that didn't literally happen and that Welles's claim "only reflected his own intense guilt...at having betrayed Dick when he needed him." Welles felt his alcoholic father "drank himself to death," and blamed himself for pushing Dick Welles over the edge by listening to the advice of friends and refusing to see his father again unless he stopped drinking. This story calls to mind Peto's epitaph of the dissolute, abandoned Falstaff in *Chimes at Midnight*: "The King has killed his heart." Welles subsequently considered his action "inexcusable," telling Leaming, "I don't want to forgive myself. That's why I hate psychoanalysis. I think if you're guilty of something you should live with it."

Welles's reminiscences of his father and Grand Detour reverberate in *This Is Orson Welles* when Bogdanovich succeeds in eliciting from Welles a precise definition of his work's thematic core. In an exchange on the gracefulness of Tarkington's lost Eden, Bogdanovich asks, "That's the thing you admire most, isn't it? That and gallantry. Isn't *Ambersons* as much a story of the end of chivalry—the end of gallantry—as *Chimes at Midnight*?" Welles corrects him by saying, "Peter, what interests me is the *idea* of these dated old virtues. And why they still seem to speak to us when, by all logic, they're so hopelessly irrelevant. That's why I've been obsessed so long with *Don Quixote*." Welles was, in many ways, his own best critic, pointing the way for professional critics to see his work more clearly and precisely.

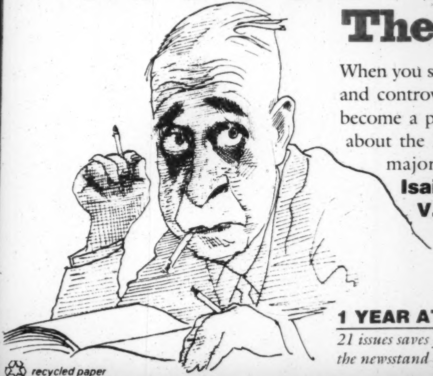
In talking with Bogdanovich about Joseph Cotten's character in *Citizen Kane*, the drama critic Jedediah Leland, who in the bitterness of old age muses that he might have served both as Charlie Kane's "stooge" and his only friend, Welles points out, "I'm a totally different kind of person from Jed Leland. I'm not a friend of the hero." When dealing with Welles and other legendary directors, the young Bogdanovich cast himself in the role of "friend of the hero," and his surprisingly intense argument with Welles about Jed Leland is one of this book's most revealing passages.

Welles vehemently objects to Bogdanovich's notion that Leland betrayed Kane by writing his negative review of Kane's pathetically inept opera-singing mistress, Susan Alexander (Dorothy Comingore). "He didn't betray Kane," Welles says of Jed Leland. "Kane betrayed him. Because he was not the man he pretended to be.... If there was any betrayal, it was on Kane's part, because he signed a Declaration of Principles which he never kept." "Then why," wonders Bogdanovich, "is there a feeling that Leland is petty and mean to Kane in the scene when he gets drunk?... [M]aybe one feels that Leland could have afforded to write a good review." "Not and been a man of principle," Welles insists. "Then why do I somewhat dislike Leland?" asks Bogdanovich. "Because he likes principles more than the man," Welles replies, "and he doesn't have the size as a person to love Kane for his faults."

I suspect that Bogdanovich may have been thinking of that exchange when he wrote, "There are quite a few things I didn't agree with Orson about in those days, but most assuredly I do now. Age and experience." The Bogdanovich who wrote those words in his conciliatory introduction to what Welles initially proposed as "a nice little book" now has the size as a person to love Welles for *his* faults. Welles displayed jealousy over his protégé's commercial success, resented the failure of Bogdanovich's efforts to help him find work in Hollywood, and feuded with him over this book, which, Bogdanovich relates, eventually became "lost somewhere in the depths of a storage facility while I was going through a personal and financial crisis."

When Welles accused Bogdanovich of saving the manuscript to release only after his death, Bogdanovich retrieved it and sent it back to him "with a note saying, in effect, it was his life, and here it was for him to do with as he saw fit." Welles was "very touched" by the gesture. Bogdanovich writes of their last conversation over the telephone, shortly before Welles's death: "We had been laughing, and then I said something about having made some terrible mistakes. He said, suddenly serious, that *he* had made so *many* mistakes, and that it seemed to be almost impossible to go through life without making an incredible number of them.... I came to realize our last conversation had been a kind of apology from both of us for having made mistakes about each other."

Though it might have seemed so to Welles, and to Bogdanovich at many times over the past seventeen years because of the obstacles Welles placed in the way of its publication, this book is not one of their mistakes, but a fitting, if imperfect, memorial to their complex and passionate friendship. ☐



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Grim Fairy Tale

The Furies
by Janet Hobhouse.
Doubleday, 293 pp., $22.50

Ann Hulbert

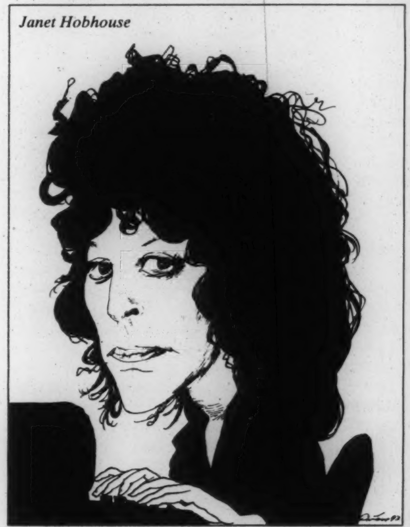
To be a writer who is told, again and again, that your life is made for fiction is rarely the pure good fortune it seems. Larger-than-life lives, after all, are not so easy to live. And truths that are stranger than fiction, the sort of truths that such lives are made of, can be next to impossible to turn into fiction. The novelist Janet Hobhouse heard the "great copy" line a lot, and her short life—she died two years ago at forty-one of cancer—was not only dramatic but hard. It was also very productive: along with a biography of Gertrude Stein and a study of twentieth-century artists and nudes, she wrote four novels, including the posthumously published *The Furies*. In her fiction she never strayed very far from her actual experience, but she had to struggle to put its most outlandish, powerful parts on the page.

Nearly every novelist, of course, both responds to and resists the claims of autobiography in one way or another. But for those, like Hobhouse, whose imaginations draw very directly from life, the trail of ambivalence is often blazed quite clearly in the work, not hard to follow once the underlying facts are known. Suddenly the camouflages are exposed, the evasions are obvious, and the recurring scenes make more sense. *The Furies* is Hobhouse's best novel, and also her most autobiographical. "Any resemblance to humans living or dead was, far from accidental, deliberate and contrived," her ex-husband wrote of the book in a reminiscence of his life with Hobhouse.* Perhaps better labeled an imaginative memoir, *The Furies* is a last work whose revelations not only chart new ground but can serve as a guide to the veiled and uneven self-portraiture in her previous three.

Nellie Without Hugo (1982) and *Dancing in the Dark* (1983) were timely contributions to a burgeoning genre: scenes from the marriages of sexually and emotionally restless young women in Manhattan during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Nellie takes up with an old boyfriend while her English husband, Hugo, is off in Africa; Gabriella, in the later novel, frenetically does the disco scene with her gay friends while her English husband, Morgan, mopes at home. Hobhouse has an eye for uptown yuppie trappings: the "right" West Side apartment decor, gourmet foods, midtown office ambience, shows at MOMA, along with a few downtown clubs and a loft or two. And of course she provides a sampling of sex. Her characters discuss it ("You mean all the little buttons," Gabriella said, "nipples and so on? But it's masturbatory"), enjoy it ("morning sex, long before the patches of light had come together to make the day, when the giant stirred, half of him still owned by sleep, half belonging with consciousness to Nellie, self-given, unasked for but dedicated"), and avoid it ("They held like that for whole minutes, Gabriella listening to Morgan's movement inside his bed, and his hurt, angry breathing, and he listening for signs of her relenting.")

Yet the books don't quite fit their moments. Hobhouse was not writing about "life styles," she was writing mostly about a recent period in her own life, and the urgency has the welcome effect of making the novels often seem, of all things, old-fashioned. Absent from both of them are the minimalist style and ironic detachment that typically go with the terrain. Instead, in each the narrator treats the heroine's problems with utmost seriousness, filtering them through an anachronistic, exacting Jamesian sensibility. Nellie and Gabriella routinely act the part of the familiar narcissist, terrified by intimacy and by autonomy, making and breaking precarious connections to other people. But they rarely *think* the part: while their bodies take a therapeutic, hedonistic route, their minds follow a more tortuous and usually more interesting course.

Janet Hobhouse



Hobhouse's characters take a refined pleasure in the pains of conscience aroused by the combination of carnal indulgence (which is often punishing) and cerebral penance (which is often indulgent). Nellie, fresh from adulterous sex with her old boyfriend, sits watching *The Rules of the Game* in a state of acute mental arousal: "And why was she fretting about all of it so ceaselessly, unable to sit back and enjoy the trumping as a simple act of nature, a forgivable deviation from the longed-for but seldom attained moral rectitude...." In the midst of the whirl of her life with her gay friends, Gabriella heightens her defiant exhilaration by not quite letting go: "Gifts, pleasures, gestures, everything in Gabriella's life had to signify. Not for her this life of unscrutinized moments, acceptance of surfaces, but more like the leaning and whining and constant demand for what was underneath and what was going to last."

But for all the sophistication of Hobhouse's anatomy of matrimony, there is, as Gabriella's leaning and whining suggest, something almost childish about the uncompromising demands that she as a writer, like her characters, makes on marriage. As they insistently pursue freedom, at the same time fearing loneliness, Nellie and Gabriella sometimes seem less like wives chafing within marriage than like children still negotiating the basic terms of independence. In *Dancing in the Dark* Hobhouse is very explicit about how much growing up Gabriella has yet to do with Morgan:

> It was a marriage of only children, self-spoiled, self-proclaimed orphans who in their fear of separation tried to make each other identical twins. And that was where the deadlock came from. Now as the orphans grew or longed to grow into adult selves, the necessary redefinitions of power threatened the first frightened pact, the defensive egalitarianism.

Both novels seem headed for marital disaster as Nellie awaits Hugo's return with detached trepidation and Gabriella and Morgan head off to Mexico barely on speaking terms. But belatedly the fear of separation prevails, not entirely convincingly.

It is in her third novel, *November* (1986), that Hobhouse confronts the collapse of a marriage and veers to the opposite extreme, isolation. In this unremittingly dark book Zachariah Quine, a composer, has sunk into an alcoholic, drugged haze since his unwanted divorce from Maggie three years earlier and is only now beginning to face life again. His dilemma is the familiar one, but this time scrutinized in a completely disillusioned light. "Desire for union conflicted with desire for freedom," his psychology student friend patly sums it up, citing Otto Rank. "The choice was between love and claustrophobia or independence and loneliness." And hovering over Zach's hopeless quest for love, the same friend observes (this time citing Melanie Klein), is a longing for a more primal nurturing bond, a yearning for the return of the mother's breast. Hobhouse lightly mocks the student's earnest explication but not the underlying insight.

From the very first sentences of *The Furies*, it begins to be clear why anxious children linger within Hobhouse's adults:

> For a long time my mother and I lived such a solitary life, city-trapped and economically precarious, so isolated from anything resembling family or stability, so utterly dependent on one another to provide a lovable human universe, that the existence of forebears...seems to me even now a kind of fairy tale....

Here the truly preoccupying conflict between dependence and independence for Hobhouse predates the modern story of troubled marriage. The novel is an almost mythic saga of struggle between parents and children, in particular between mothers and daughters. The shadow of the author's passionate but ambivalent bond with her strange and beautiful mother is cast over everything.

Hobhouse had planned for years to write about the women in her family, her ex-husband remembered; he was surprised at "how long it took Janet to realize just how important, and in what dangerous a sense, her mother was to her." She tried some preliminary sketching in *Nellie Without Hugo*, and she began taping her mother's reminiscences. But even before Hobhouse fully faced her mother on the page, the relationship between them plainly influenced the dire emotional calculus of her first three novels: love is always an entrapment, but the loss of love is never a liberation for her characters as they "struggle to be free in the world." On the evidence of *The Furies*, it seems that Hobhouse turned to write at length about her mother, who was now dead, shortly before she herself was diagnosed with cancer. The grim prognosis didn't derail her portrait of their long and inescapable entanglement. If anything, her ill-fated past seems to have become an even more pressing subject once she learned of the ill fate ahead of her.

The story that Hobhouse gives her first-person autobiographical narrator, Helen, certainly is great copy, almost too great. But right from the opening, which sketches in Helen's family background, Hobhouse finds a tone for her almost incredible memoir which manages to be well balanced between portentous and plain spoken. In the Whartonesque prologue, mother-daughter conflict emerges as a kind of dynastic curse in the Woolf clan, passed down from generation to generation of a formerly well-to-do but now scattered German Jewish family that once ran an importing company in New York. Helen is the product of yet another rebellious union between a daughter and an inappropriate suitor. Bett, her mother, made a brief and disastrous marriage to an Englishman and then fled back to New York, snatching her baby daughter from the arms of her husband's family at the airport.

In the first section of *The Furies*, "Women," Hobhouse bypasses the prosperous, young professional Manhattan of her earlier work for a cramped female corner of the city. This is not to say that gritty realism prevails; not at all. Helen recounts the strange fortunes and grim misfortunes of her youthful life with her mother in the calm cadences of a fairy tale. Despite plenty of up-to-date urban details, the characters and the atmosphere seem to have emerged from some cut-off world where public events barely impinge. Time moves forward, but there is an underlying sense of slow circular motion.

The story begins with abandonment. In America, Bett proves unable to hold down any job for long, and in dire straits sends five-year-old Helen off to boarding school. For five years Helen pines for her mother, living for her occasional visits, which are never dependable. Bett always arrives late and often on the arm of some new beau; she goes through men almost as quickly as jobs. Devotion and disappointment feed on each other, for mother and daughter alike. One day the child's dangerous dream comes true: the tuition stops coming and she gets to leave her prison. "I was to see my irregularly descending goddess up close," Helen reminisces in a tone that admits irony but also insists on intensity. "I was to be...free to live my life as I had dreamed of it since I was five: at long last together, alone, and always with Bett."

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*"Death of an Author," *The Guardian*, March 10, 1992.

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After Helen's release, the story becomes one of bewitchment: a child living two lives, a nearly destitute one in New York, and a bewilderingly vivid one within the orbit of her unstable, adored mother. Intermingling a young girl's concrete perceptions and a more mature daughter's later reflections, Hobhouse manages to convey both psychological complexity and a primitive enchantment. Helen is enthralled by Bett's helpless and hopeless romances with men, devastated by her periodic deep depressions, and overwhelmed by their mutual dependence. Before long she becomes aware that something has to break the spell:

> If we were like sisters to the world, it was because we were both children, and it seemed to me more and more that I was going to have to be the one to grow up if either of us was going to survive. I was bent then on our doing that, and I still believed it could be done. Of course, part of me still expected Bett to do it for us, only the more I observed, the more I could see that we were one mother short and that it was going to have to be me that looked for the bread crumbs and led us both from the forest.

Given the dynastic curse, it's already implicit that mother and daughter will not both emerge from the dark wood. And indeed as her adolescence nears, Helen's devotion to Bett begins to erode, though her mother remains doting as ever. "I knew that I had secretly abandoned my mother as my heroine. I remained fiercely loving, but a little part of my brain was already fixed on betrayal, fluttering anxiously for some way out of the tunnel her life, and mine with her, increasingly seemed to be."

Hobhouse's legend of goddesses and demons, idolatry and betrayal, is a real departure from the dense psychological surface of her earlier novels. The acute introspection is still there, as Helen the narrator analyzes in retrospect, but the preternatural wisdom of Helen the spellbound girl gives the reflection its moral momentum and concreteness: she endures while her older self dissects. Given this interplay, the end of childhood approaches as a narrative dilemma. And sure enough, when Helen becomes a rebellious adolescent, the distance between her and the narrating Helen shrinks; tension migrates from the depths to the surface, where it lodges in stereotypes. Suddenly the introspection veers into abstractions—"I'm scared of a lot of things. Scared of not growing up. being left in a puppyhood of confusions"—and the external description leans on social clichés: "By the end of my fifteenth year, when the Fab Four sang 'Twist and Shout' and everyone in the orchestra rushed the stage...."

Like almost every teen-age daughter, Helen consigns her mother to the periphery, and Hobhouse herself suddenly seems aware that without the eccentric, curiously alluring figure of Bett, her story risks flatness. She skims over Helen's adolescent agonies, hurrying toward another implausibly literary (but true) plot twist to propel the story back into the realm of the super-real: Helen's long-lost father suddenly surfaces as the reluctant agent of deliverance. Francis invites her to England, urged on, in a variation on the usual fairy-tale conventions, by his wife, Helen's well-meaning stepmother.

The aura of magical ominousness briefly returns but then fades in the second section, "Men." Facing her father in fiction for the first time, Hobhouse filters another improbable fragment of memoir through the lens and language of fable. Francis bewitches by bullying, and he literally stuns his daughter into a deep sleep; Helen can barely get out of bed, but when she rallies she is transformed, with a British accent, literary aspirations, and love interests. And thus Hobhouse finds herself back on the familiar, disenchanted terrain of romance, marriage, and adultery. It's almost as if she is a little impatient to be tramping through it yet again. Helen's first blissful Oxford romance with Hugh, followed by her much more tormented years with Ned—they are forever leaving each other, then returning, and finally embarking on a marriage that is rocky from the start—are all at least dimly, and sometimes very sharply, reminiscent of scenes from the lives of Nellie and Gabriella in her earlier books.

With one significant exception: the "old redneck sweetheart" with whom Nellie had her affair while Hugo was gone turns out to have been that rarity for Hobhouse, a studious departure from autobiography (which perhaps helps explain why he is such an unconvincing character). *The Furies* corrects the record. Helen, back in New York with Ned, takes up with the antithesis of that redneck: her older lover is a famous, cerebral writer she calls Jack, whose artful conversation and "sexual brainpower made for a kind of nerve-wracking exhilaration." Hobhouse's portrait of the recognizable author will doubtless be a document for his future biographers, but it also records his gift to her: his life was a model, then utterly foreign to her, of almost puritanical literary dedication and discipline.

In *November* Zach the composer mulls, mostly in vain, over the relation between his music and the mess of his life, and the role of art again becomes a question in the final novel as Helen's life accelerates into chaos. Ostensibly it seems that artlessness prevails: in "The Furies," the novel's third section, the subject is once again daughter and mother, and the exposition in "Men" gives way to much more fragmentary confessional memory. From a freighted fairy tale, the narrative turns into a surreal nightmare in the wake of Bett's suicide. Hobhouse may well have had further refinements in mind (a preliminary publisher's note suggests as much), but in fact she has unobtrusively created the desired jagged effect. Her sped-up prose conveys real turmoil.

Yet within the bold, broken lines that describe a daughter's collapse one can make out a shadowy portrait of an artist emerging, retreating, emerging again. Hobhouse's touch is light, but there is real suspense in the understated story of literary struggle. Overcome by "terrible love and grief," Helen is pursued by memories of her mother, and yet also compelled by the darkness to write. Finally she succumbs to depression, can't write, can barely go out. The metamorphosis has been long foreshadowed, but nonetheless it comes as a surprise: Helen becomes a version of Bett. "I shed the trappings of my own life and took on hers, both in penance and in love."

Just as Helen has begun to write again and to summon the strength to emerge from "solitary confinement," she is diagnosed with ovarian cancer and told she has little time left. The last short section, "Alone," seems to have been hurried on to the page. Its tone is a jarring change from what has preceded and what might be expected: facing death, Helen suddenly becomes an optimistic soul, facing her sentence with almost prosaic equanimity. The shift is genuinely shocking: where ominousness has weighed down everyday life for almost three hundred pages, now mundaneness lightens death. The closing scenes are uneven, but in dramatizing Helen's cheerful comic distance, Hobhouse sometimes strikes a witty, precarious balance between the two obvious dangers, sentimentality and a facile stoicism. "I was afraid I was going to blow it, this dying," Helen worries. "It wasn't like childbirth; there were no classes for it."

Knowing of the life behind the fiction and waiting for the heroic last touches on the portrait of the artist, one reads the closing pages waiting for Hobhouse to grant a final, self-reflexive autobiographical revelation: to describe how the "state of grace" that transformed her life at the end also inspired the art that we've just read. But Hobhouse modestly skirts any heroic last literary scene, omitting all inference to her final work. Instead she dismissively sums up her oeuvre as "three books which might get mentioned in some small press somewhere when I went, but not the real stuff." And then, in a short coda, Hobhouse swerves away from melodramatic memoir and has Helen announce that against all odds she has survived.

In a sense of course Hobhouse did survive: she managed to resurrect herself in *The Furies*. And given her silence about the completion of her book, it's possible to imagine that she had at last achieved the dull, austere artistic discipline that she clearly aspired to. Helen, awed by her lover Jack's ascetic literary habits, so different from her own distraction, envied "the monkish habits of his solitude, the grim, even depressive minimalism of his life." Zach had a similar glimpse of rescue through artistic rigor in *November*. The passage is preachy, but in retrospect it sounds almost prophetic:

> Art must proceed, he told himself, like his life, from freedom to necessity, from a beginning where everything is possible to the point where only one thing is right, from can to must, to yes through no. And then another thing, his art and his life must all be one and the same.... And furthermore, the task was to make out of the utterly formless energies of sensation and emotion something you can bring out again, something as simple as a melody.

Hobhouse seems to have suspected all along that deprivation might be, for her, the key to liberation; that acknowledging fate might be a step toward freedom. As she worked on *The Furies* she had clearly arrived at the point where she knew the one right thing to write. Her dark life did not inspire a simple melody, but it taught her some of the most challenging rules of disharmony. ☐

The Truth About the CIA

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1.

The secret war concealed within the cold war achieved a kind of climax one chilly morning in the early 1960s in the Congo, when two boats slowly approached each other along the western shore of Lake Tanganyika. These were no native dugouts, but long, sleek craft with powerful engines. Whether it was someone in the southern boat heading north or someone in the northern boat heading south who first distinguished the low diesel rumble of the approaching boat over the growl of his own, I cannot say, for my informant is now dead. Nor can I say who spied the other first, or who fired first, or what was shouted in the panic and confusion as bullets were exchanged during the frantic moments before engines were revved up and the two powerful craft veered off into the mist. But I can report that the shouts of alarm that echoed over Lake Tanganyika, uttered by the hired warriors of the United States and the Soviet Union, were in both cases Cuban Spanish, mother tongue alike of the Cubans who went to the Congo to make a revolution with Che Guevara at Soviet expense and the Cubans dispatched to foil them by the intelligence agencies of America.

This brief encounter, a kind of bump in the night, summed up for my friend Sam Adams, a former analyst for the CIA, the loony quality of the secret cold war—a clash of proxies in an out-of-the-way corner of the world which was nevertheless freighted with heavy strategic significance for the policy makers of Washington. What gave Adams's story its power for me was the fact that Adams had never set foot in Africa, much less the Congo. What he loved was the stacks of secret documents that crossed his desk at the Central Intelligence Agency. A morning's work memorizing the correct pronunciation of the names of native tribes made him the house expert on the Congo. It became his job to read the Congo cable traffic every morning, and there he found the story of the battle of Lake Tanganyika. He passed it on to me a decade later with such conviction that for a year I assumed he had been in the CIA boat with the CIA Cubans looking death in the eye.

James Angleton

Adams's story came to my mind following the collapse of the Soviet Union two years ago, so like the disintegration of an army routed in wartime. The manner of its ending revealed some fundamental things about the cold war: it really was a war, and prosecuting it took conscious effort and resolution. The control of nations was at stake, one side lost, and the other prevailed. In every way it was like the other great political contests of history save one: there was no spasm of bloodletting at the end. Why this was so is a question intimately related to another one, also central: How important to the outcome of the cold war were the battle of Lake Tanganyika and all the other clandestine skirmishing, the spying and the counterspying, the black propaganda and hidden pulling of strings, the keeping and breaching of secrets during the forty-five years after the Soviet Union planted its armies in the heart of Europe at the end of the Second World War? In short, did the United States, which spent perhaps half a trillion dollars on intelligence since 1945, get its money's worth?

The CIA was far from alone in the secret war waged against the intelligence services of the Soviet Union and its allied states. The National Security Agency, with its code-breaking computers, dwarfs the CIA in this country, and a host of foreign services were involved in the West, especially the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), or Federal Intelligence Service of Germany, and the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS) of Great Britain. But the CIA was to the Western effort as the US Army was to the Allied landing at Normandy in 1944, first among equals and the principal source of men and money. The agency brought a crusading passion to the struggle on its founding in 1947. Disappointment and setbacks taught patience and realism to intelligence professionals, but they never lost confidence that they could handle the Russians if the Congress and the press would only stay out of the way. Joseph Persico in his fine but unfootnoted biography of William Casey reports that an Israeli journalist once asked President Reagan's new Director of Central Intelligence why he gave so much attention to a banana republic like Nicaragua. Casey answered, "I'm looking for a place to start rolling back the Communist empire."

This was confidence on the grand scale, and it got Casey and the Reagan administration into deep trouble. If the Iran-contra affair can be said to have had one preeminent cause it was the administration's determination to keep up the pressure on the Soviet-backed government of Nicaragua despite the Boland Amendment of July 1983 which prohibited the use of American funds to arm the contras. The Congress had a hard time deciding what it wanted to do in Central America, but Casey did not. As an Irish Catholic trained in Jesuit schools, Casey had no trouble in the 1930s choosing sides in the Spanish Civil War. The way he saw it the Soviets were backing Marxists who raped nuns and killed priests. One of Casey's old friends, Leo Cherne, told Persico that Casey "was 100 per cent for Franco and 100 per cent against the Loyalists."

This strain of anti-Communist zeal,

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undiluted after fifty years, shocked and frightened much of the foreign-policy bureaucracy in Washington in the early 1980s when President Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" and some of his aides—Paul Nitze and Richard Perle among others—talked of speeding up the strategic arms race in order to spend the Russians into bankruptcy. Reagan cited the practical burdens of a flood of refugees if the Communists went unchecked in Central America, but what really seems to have worried him was the Reds' slow chipping away at the "Free World." Vietnam and Cambodia were lost, Ethiopia and Angola were defended by Cuban troops, the Russians were in Kabul after one hundred years of trying; they were also sending arms to the Sandinistas, and the Sandinistas in turn were backing a revolution next door in El Salvador. But when Casey and the President talked about bankrupting the Soviets and "rolling back the Communist empire," they aroused fears of reckless provocation leading to large-scale war on the part of much of the foreign policy establishment in Washington, the liberal press, a great many university professors, the World Council of Churches, the Democratic Congress, and me.

Now, only a few years later, Casey is dead of a brain tumor and President Reagan has retired to his house in the West, but the joke is not on them. They were barely out of town when the Communist empire began unraveling. To celebrate a milestone in the historic retreat, Casey's successor, William Webster, held a little party in the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia, on February 15, 1989, according to Mark Perry in his oddly titled new book, *Eclipse: The Last Days of the CIA*. On that day, after ten years of failure as expensive as they were humiliating, the Soviets pulled the last of their troops out of Afghanistan. A couple of years later they wouldn't even be Soviets anymore. Webster was no tiger of the cold war like Casey, but he could see the end had come. "This is a victory for America," he said, "but it is also a victory for the CIA."

It is too soon to say whether Marxism as an evangelical movement died with the Soviet state, but it is a good moment, perhaps, to examine claims such as Webster's about what destroyed it. If we grant that the cold war itself was the test failed by the Soviet regime, then it follows that the secret cold war was a principal field of conflict. The torrent of intelligence books published during the last year or two touches on many of the themes and battlefields of the secret war, starting with the first clandestine skirmishes in the Baltic and Ukraine at the end of World War II, and continuing on through the technical triumphs of overhead reconnaissance and the ten-year guerrilla war in Afghanistan. Defeat there would not have been a disaster for a healthy superpower, but the Soviet Union in the 1980s was not healthy. In this last battle of the cold war the money and the arms provided by the CIA weighed heavily in the scale.

2.

The invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 caught Washington unprepared. A Soviet client state in Kabul had been faltering under guerrilla attack but the CIA, preoccupied with Iran, had failed to recognize the warning signs. This amazed no one; intelligence agencies have a dismal record of predicting things that have not happened before. The Soviet attack was stunningly swift and efficient, and it was especially alarming because it broke an unwritten rule of the cold war—that the Soviets were extremely cautious about committing their own troops to battle outside Europe. But not even the hard liners in the Carter administration suggested launching a serious attempt to drive the Soviets out again. The President simply authorized a low-level CIA program of aid to the mujaheddin rebels to make life more difficult and more expensive for the Soviets.

Backing a guerrilla war takes a hard heart. The mujaheddin—soon referred to as "the Muj"—wanted enough arms to win, but the CIA and other backers were reluctant to push the Soviets to the brink of defeat for fear of setting off a big war. The tension of managing such a conflict is well-described by a former Pakistani intelligence officer, General Mohammad Yousaf, in *The Bear Trap*, published recently in Britain and Europe. When Yousaf took over the Afghan bureau of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) in October 1983, he faced a supremely delicate problem—in providing arms to the seven Afghan political groups actually fighting the Soviets, he was in effect directing seven different wars.

The Muj had the political support of the entire Muslim world including Iran, of the United States and Britain, and of China, but when it comes to arms, business is business. Egypt, for example, sold whole warehouses full of obsolete Soviet arms to the CIA, which transferred them to Pakistan where they were divvied up for the different factions of the Muj.

The idea was to maintain the fiction that the Muj were capturing their arms from the Soviets on the battlefield. The reality was that Egypt got hard currency for worthless weapons, the CIA kept the US at arm's length from the war, and the rebels were outgunned. But Yousaf had to take what he could get, including 60,000 rifles and 8,000 machine guns of World War II vintage dug out of warehouses in Turkey, an unbelievably cumbersome Swiss anti-aircraft gun which fired $50,000 worth of ammunition per minute and took twenty mules to haul around the Afghan countryside, and a British surface-to-air missile called the Blowpipe which had proved useless in the Falklands war.

What Yousaf wanted and the Muj needed was the American shoulder-fired, anti-aircraft missile called the Stinger. For three years the Americans held back on the grounds it might fall into the hands of terrorists. This was a sober fear; the Stinger was the perfect tool for bringing down jumbo jets loaded with passengers. But just as real was American concern that Stingers would work too well, suddenly tip the balance of power on the battlefield, and thereby invite a dangerous Soviet escalation of the war. "I had to ensure that we did not provoke them sufficiently to do so," Yousaf writes. "A war with the Soviets would have been the end of Pakistan and could have unleashed a world war. It was a great responsibility, and one which I had to keep constantly in mind during those years."

But eventually the Americans provided Stingers to the Muj. What decided the matter, according to a *Washington Post* article by Steve Coll last summer,[1] was secret intelligence information beginning in 1984 about Soviet military plans to throw more troops and weapons into the war. With American support Yousaf had been trying to "make Afghanistan their Vietnam" and it was working. The Soviets responded with a plan to win the war through sharply increased use of the KGB, elite "Spetsnaz" paratroopers, helicopters, and sophisticated battlefield communication vans. By the time the energetic commander of Soviet forces in Germany, General Mikhail Zaitsev, had been transferred to Afghanistan in the spring of 1985, the Americans were also prepared for an escalated struggle. CIA director William Casey visited Muj camps in Pakistan and backed plans to carry the war across the Amu River into the Soviet Union itself—pugnacity at a level the United States had not dared to show since the early 1950s.

But it was Stingers, not cross-border operations, that made the difference. The Muj brought down their first Soviet helicopter with a Stinger in September 1986, and over the following ten months nearly 190 of the lethal missiles were fired by the rebels with an astounding 75 percent kill rate. That was the beginning of the end for the Soviets. Afghan pilots flying the Soviet-made assault helicopters were soon overheard complaining on the radio that their Soviet "advisers" no longer dared to fly, and the Muj bottled up their opponents under virtual siege in a handful of major cities and military camps. With the failure of the Soviet offensive, Mikhail Gorbachev elected to cut his losses. Just what part the Afghan disaster played in the slow-motion Soviet collapse during those years must await the work of historians with access to Soviet archives, but it is clear that the process was hurried along by the cost in blood and money of the Afghan war. The biggest share of the credit for victory goes first to the Muj who fought the war, then to the Pakistanis who stuck their necks out to back them.[2]

But the decision to use American Stingers was also important, and that in part was the direct result of "secret intelligence information," which helped to convince Washington to act before a new Soviet military campaign could get under way. *The Washington Post*'s Steve Coll, when he reported that such secret information existed, did not specify how it was obtained. I myself have heard reports, which I cannot confirm, that a high-level agent in the Soviet government was recruited by the CIA, perhaps as early as the late 1970s; that this person had access to the deliberations of the Politburo, and that his or her reports of the impulsive decision behind the invasion in 1979, followed by bitter division over how to proceed thereafter, were an important factor in the Reagan administration's willingness to risk a bigger war by taking a stand.

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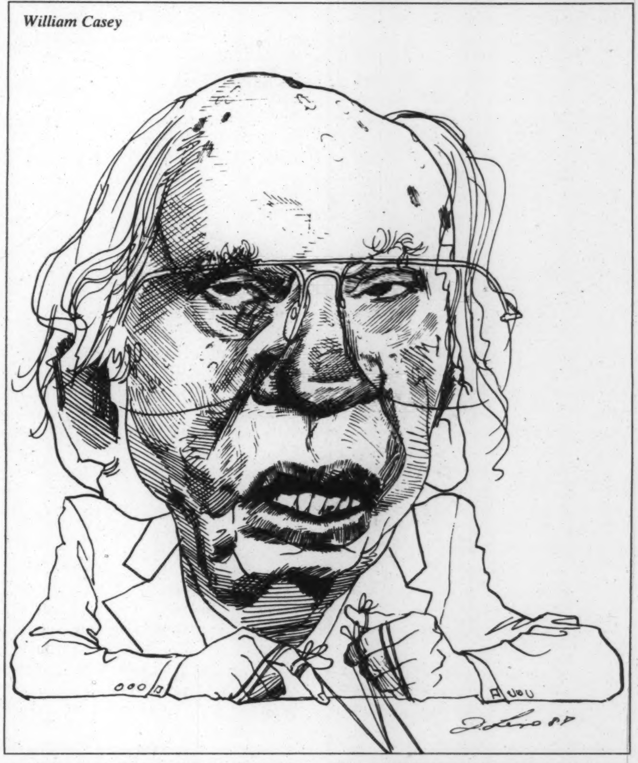
[1] Steve Coll, "Anatomy of a Victory: CIA's Covert Afghan War," *The Washington Post*, July 19, 1992.

[2] That such operations may later have unexpected consequences is suggested by the recent conclusion by Ted Koppel to a report on *Nightline*, on April 1:

> During the war in Afghanistan, the CIA and the State Department routinely facilitated trips to Afghanistan and back into the United States for members of the Mujaheddin. It is more than likely that several of the men now charged with bombing the World Trade Center were once paid and supported by agencies of the US government.

I write "agent," but of course the correct word might be source, if the information came from some technically sophisticated means of monitoring the deliberations of the Politburo. This is typical of the way knowledge of an important spy (or source) slowly surfaces in the public record. Journalists do not uncover spies, but only tease out, or, more often, gratefully receive, information already gathered or surmised by intelligence services. One or two vague reports suggest where something important is still to be found; later writers go back to the subject, slowly dredging up the details which guide their successors, until at some point the official keepers of secrets let the story go. Many important intelligence stories have nothing to do with spies, of course, but the most sensational revelations of the cold war have almost all been spy stories, and recent books on intelligence have tended to focus on espionage cases. Veterans of the intelligence business claim there is no substitute for human sources; the expense of recruiting agents may be immense, but an hour with a well-placed spy can be worth a year of slogging through public records, overhead reconnaissance photographs, and other technical data gathered by the bale.

William Casey



The Soviet intelligence services—principally the *Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti* (Committee for State Security), or KGB, and the *Glavnoe Razvedyvatel'noe Upravlenie* (Chief Intelligence Directorate of the Soviet military) or GRU[3]—had a reputation for almost occult skill in recruiting human agents. They certainly recruited a lot of them—some so sensitively placed they have set off major political crises in Britain, Germany, France, and the United States. Tom Bower's recent book on clandestine British operations in the Baltic in the late 1940s, *The Red Web*, adds some significant detail to one major early spy episode, including a passing reference to the Finnish intelligence chief Reino Hallamaa, whose name I do not recall seeing in print before. In 1944 Hallamaa delivered 1,500 pages of material, including an almost complete Soviet codebook, to the OSS station in Stockholm. This material soon reached the head of the OSS, William Donovan, in Washington, but US policy at the time was to treat the Soviets as trustworthy allies. Donovan was ordered to hand the material over to the Soviets and he did—but not before retaining a secret copy.

This is a typical backdoor entry to an intelligence story—highly particular, a little hard to follow, harder to see the point. Bower's reference to the codebook, as is often the case with disclosures of intelligence secrets, is incidental to his main story. The central subject of *The Red Web* is the provocative British operation to start a partisan war against the Soviets in the Baltic republics that were forcibly annexed by Stalin at the beginning of the Second World War. There was no shortage of Latvians, Estonians, and Lithuanians eager to die in this hopeless endeavor. The British never expected them to win, but, like the Americans during the tense years between the Berlin blockade in 1948 and battlefield stalemate in Korea in 1951–1952, they feared a big European war with the Russians might soon take place and wanted allies behind the lines when it began. The Americans ran a similar operation in Ukraine, just as hopeless, but one that still awaits a historian.

Bower tells a sad story of misplaced heroism on the part of the Baltic resisters, who were cold-bloodedly discarded by the British. Many agents were simply informed by radio that the game was over and they were on their own. The intelligence officers who ran it were old anti-Soviet hands from the 1920s and 1930s, like Harry Carr, born in Russia in 1899, the son of a British expatriate who managed a timber mill. Carr's world and his family's wealth were whisked away by the Revolution while he was at school in Britain. In 1925 Carr was working for the SIS in Riga, the world capital of espionage directed against the Bolshevik regime, when the Soviets were able to capture two of their bitterest enemies, Boris Savinkov and Sidney Reilly, with a brilliantly executed deception operation known ever since as "The Trust." Even fifty years later CIA counterintelligence experts would cite "The Trust" in a solemn whisper as proof of the Soviet capacity for deep schemes to trick the West.

But despite watching this disaster firsthand in Riga, according to Bower, Carr fell for a similar Soviet operation in the Baltics when a KGB officer established a phony partisan band in the forests of Lithuania. We may gain a hint of how badly things went wrong from the simple fact that Carr, in the spring of 1950, was introduced to his counterpart at the CIA, Harry Rositzke, by the SIS liaison officer in Washington, Harold Adrian Russell Philby, known as "Kim" to a host of American and British intelligence officers who would spend the rest of their lives regretting every confidence shared over martinis with the infamous spy for the Russians. It was the job of the two Harrys to carry the cold war to Russia. A few months after they were introduced by Philby, the American Harry told the British Harry that the CIA had begun to suspect that the British partisans were under Soviet control. "Harry," said the British Harry, brushing these doubts aside, "I think we know our business on this one."

Such complacency was fully matched by the humiliating disaster which followed, but it was small satisfaction to the American Harry. His agents all disappeared into Ukraine. Guerrilla operations behind the Iron Curtain were over by the mid-1950s, and were never resumed until the CIA sent armed Afghani guerrillas across

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[3] I look up things like this in Leo D. Carl's *International Dictionary of Intelligence*, published by International Defense Consultant Services, Inc., of McLean, Virginia, in 1990. This is an extremely useful reference work for intelligence organizations and combatants in the cold war. Typical is a twenty-four-page list of operational code names from Operation Ajax (the 1953 overthrow of Mossadegh in Iran) to Operation Zinc (a British commando mission to Czechoslovakia during World War II).

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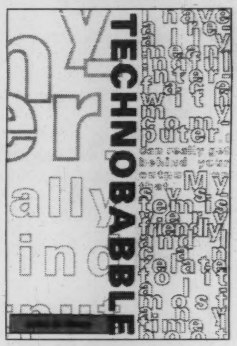

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the Amu River. Bower, a producer of documentaries for the BBC, tells his story well, with much detail and some vividly drawn characters. There is no clearer sign of the end of the cold war than the fact that so many former British, American, and Soviet-bloc intelligence officers sat down with Bower and told him in detail about what had happened.

When we hear of the events in *The Red Web* next it will be from a scholar who has had access to the files. But it is unlikely that more detail will much change the sad story. The Soviets ran circles around these early Western operations, but the Baltic campaigns served at least one purpose all the same. Sending armed men across a rival's borders is a sign of resolution more readily believed than words. After the takeover of Czechoslovakia, the Americans and the British made it clear they would tolerate no further westward creep of the Iron Curtain, and cold war shooting thereafter took place exclusively in the third world.

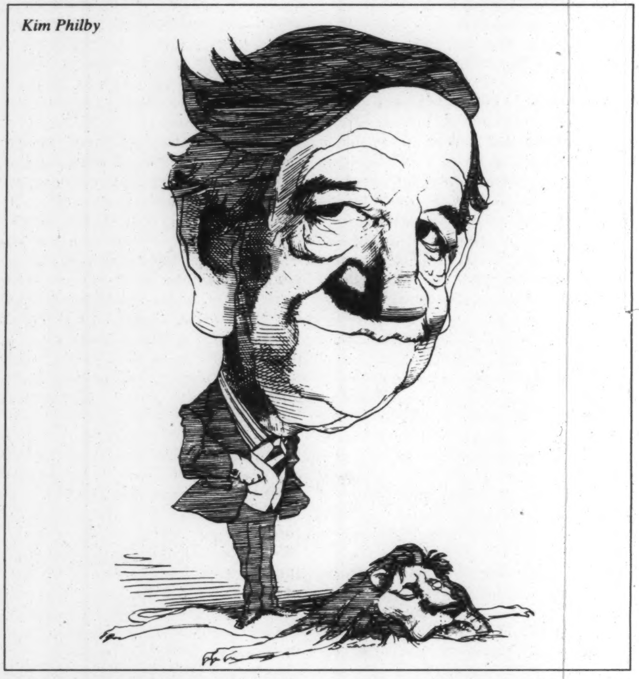
3.

But what of the Soviet codebooks discovered by the Finns and delivered to Donovan of the OSS in 1944? After the war American cryptanalysts resumed the monitoring of Soviet cable traffic, suspended during the common fight against Hitler. In the late 1940s, with the aid of the codebooks provided by the Finns, American cryptanalysts managed to break some of the KGB messages, referred to as the "Venona material," between Moscow and the Soviet consulate in New York. The best account of this still fragmentary story is to be found in *The FBI–KGB War* by former FBI agent Robert J. Lamphere and Tom Schactman. In the decrypted messages Soviet agents were all referred to by code names, but additional information known as "collateral"—the fact, for example, that "Homer" visited his pregnant wife in New York on a certain date—allowed some of these agents to be identified. Several of the biggest spy stories of the 1950s came directly from the Venona material, but most of the cryptonyms have never been identified. The so-called "spy-scare" or "Red scare" of the 1950s was in some part the result of the FBI's frustration in its attempt to identify all the Soviet agents cited in the Venona material. Since the Soviet intelligence services in the 1920s and 1930s freely recruited members of local Communist parties to serve as spies, those in, or close to, the American CP fell under a kind of blanket of suspicion.

Lamphere's book adds much important information to the stories of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed as "atomic spies" in 1951; of the British scientist Klaus Fuchs, who provided them with information from Los Alamos, and of the Soviet spy ring which included Donald Maclean, Guy Burgess, and Kim Philby.[4] What concerns Lamphere is the way these spies were identified, a story tightly classified until recent years. Fuchs confessed and Maclean, Burgess, and Philby declared themselves by defecting, but the Rosenbergs died defending their innocence. Lamphere worked to declassify the Venona material in the hope that publication of once secret messages about the Rosenbergs would dispel public doubts about their guilt. But nowhere does Lamphere use the word "Venona" or any of the cryptonyms of Soviet agents. A likely reason for this continued reticence is the fact that one partially decrypted message about "Stanley" may—or may not—be central to an important counterintelligence case still bitterly contested after nearly fifty years.

Stanley appeared in the opening act of the secret cold war, which may be said to have begun in September 1945 with the defection in Canada of the Soviet code clerk Igor Gouzenko, who fled with a sheaf of documents and much information about Soviet spy rings. Half-forgotten now, the episode set off a major international flap at the time while the Soviets furiously accused Gouzenko of being a common thief and the Canadians debated whether to keep or surrender him. Among much other important information delivered by Gouzenko was his report of a Soviet spy inside British intelligence—just who and where he did not know. A September 1945 KGB message, deciphered by the cryptanalysts in the summer of 1950, reported confirmation of "information from Stanley" about the Gouzenko defection. A new sentence began, "When Stanley returns from. . . ." The missing word came from the "K" section of the Soviet codebook, which had been damaged and rendered illegible on a Finnish battlefield.

Kim Philby



In the years that followed the 1951 defection of Burgess and Maclean it was assumed by some British and American counterintelligence analysts that "Stanley" must have been Kim Philby, who fit Gouzenko's vague description and had been on a mission to Turkey at the time of the Gouzenko defection. The Russians spell Constantinople with a "k." Philby was forced out of British Intelligence in 1951 and his defection a dozen years later established beyond doubt that he had been a Soviet spy. But was he Stanley?

There is no such thing as a dead case in a spy war. In the 1960s a new counterintelligence scare was precipitated by the KGB defector Anatoli Golitsyn, who tied up the CIA and the SIS in knots with claims that Soviet moles had penetrated their organization. Golitsyn and another Soviet defector, Yuri Nosenko, have been the subject of several books, most recently *Cold Warrior* by Tom Mangold, another BBC producer, and *Molehunt* by David Wise, both of which add much new detail to the affair but fail to capture the strange and elusive personality of the CIA's chief molehunter, James Angleton.[5] What's important about intelligence literature is what it tells us about international conflict, but what's interesting about it is the often obsessed cast of characters, who bring an element of human drama to otherwise abstract questions of policy. Angleton went mad trying to understand what the KGB was up to, but he went mad subtly, leaving room to wonder if he had not perhaps seen deeper into certain affairs than some of his critics.

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[4] Many loose ends of old spy stories are partially cleared up by Lamphere's book—for example, the background of the relentless security investigation of Sylvia Press, a counterintelligence analyst in the CIA, described in her fine novel, *The Care of Devils* (Beacon Press, 1958). Press was never formally charged, but she gathered that it had something to do with a male friend she had accompanied on a trip to Mexico. A CIA analyst once told me that Press's friend had turned up in the Venona material, and Lamphere (p. 248) describes just such an incident. None of this justifies Press's hounding by CIA security officers, but it helps explain the atmosphere which made it possible.

[5] A brief explanation of the issues involved may be found in my review in these pages of Edward Jay Epstein's *Deception: The Invisible War Between the KGB and the CIA*, *The New York Review*, August 17, 1989.

But there is no question he was dotty. During the early 1960s he took as gospel Golitsyn's claim that the Sino-Soviet split was simply another deception operation in the spirit of The Trust. These were the years when Secretary of State Dean Rusk was arguing that the United States had to hold the line in Vietnam to stop "Beiping." After the war was over and the Americans had gone home it was obvious that we had fought and bled on behalf of the Chinese—the last thing they wanted was a Vietnamese victory. Angleton, who assiduously spread doubts about the real enmity of the Chinese and the Soviets, bears some of the blame for the disaster.

Intelligence services like to hold onto their files until everybody who can explain them is decrepit or dead, so Angleton may never get the biographer he deserves. It is no discredit to Mangold or Wise to say that their well-told stories of Soviet defectors must be seen as interim reports. Wise in particular adds much new information about the devastating effect of the CIA's prolonged investigation of Golitsyn's claims. Internal investigations blighted or ended the careers of numerous CIA officials until Angleton was at last forced to retire in 1974 by William Colby—himself one of Angleton's many suspects.

But while the investigations continued old cases were reopened; Gouzenko's clues of 1945 were dusted off and the analysts hit on something truly troubling—the possibility that "Stanley" was not Philby, but the chief of the British counterintelligence service between 1952 and 1956, Sir Roger Hollis.[6] One small, perhaps vital piece of evidence was the KGB sentence beginning "When Stanley returns from..." Here the antic God of intelligence intervened. At the same time that Kim Philby had been dispatched to Constantinople, Roger Hollis had been sent to help debrief Gouzenko in Canada, which the Russians spell with a "k."

Does any of this make a big difference? In the event of war the Soviets doubtless could have made good use of Roger Hollis at MI5, and Philby would have been an important asset as well. But how important? Philby betrayed many agents and informants, but aside from this, no one has yet shown that he gave the Soviets anything more than a secret sense of superiority. It is just as hard to establish the real importance of another famous Soviet spy, George Blake, whose recent autobiography, *No Other Choice*, written from exile in Moscow, captures the strange naiveté of the man. Like many spies, he was caught by his interrogator, which is to say that he betrayed himself.

Blake had been active in the Dutch Resistance during the war and he joined the British SIS soon after. But in a Korean POW camp he switched sides and over the next eight years as a Soviet agent he delivered huge quantities of material to his case officers, a large part of it while stationed in Berlin. Most sensational of the secrets he betrayed was the Berlin tunnel, which made its way several hundred yards into the Soviet zone where CIA technicians tapped into telephone cables. Doubtless the Soviets were glad to know about the tunnel, which gave them an ideal opportunity to feed information to the West for their own purposes, but more important to the KGB would have been Blake's detailed information about SIS officers and their agents allowing the Soviets to monitor their adversaries. Intelligence services hold each other in close embrace; in a classic example Blake describes an SIS file he once read of the reports of British and Dutch watchers who had trailed and then lost a known KGB officer named Korovin in Holland in 1953. Many heads had been scratched over Korovin's mission. It was no mystery to Blake; Korovin had come to meet him.

Even the best spies cannot survive such scrutiny for long. Eventually the British picked up information pointing to Blake, but knowing he was a spy and proving it in court are two different things. The break came when Blake's interrogator, Harold Shergold, playing the good cop in April 1961, said he understood where Blake had gone wrong—he'd been tortured by the Chinese Communists while a prisoner of war in Korea, he'd confessed he was an SIS officer, and thereafter the Soviets simply blackmailed him.

A simple denial would probably have returned Blake to the streets as a civilian. But Shergold's suggestion he'd been coerced struck Blake as monstrous. He burst out, "Nobody tortured me!... I myself approached the Soviets and offered my services to them of my own accord!" He explained that it was Karl Marx who had recruited him. There were no books in the Korean POW camp save a few texts in Russian, and *Das Kapital*, read aloud to a friend to pass the time, had convinced Blake that humanity's future was in the East. This confession led straight to jail; six years later a daring escape brought him to Russia, where, he writes in a wistful aside, "up to the 1970s one could keep up the illusion that we were moving forward all the time."

But useful as Blake may have been to the Soviets, it is hard to argue that great affairs of state turned upon his treason. A much better case can be made for the importance of what the Soviets learned from the agent they called "Homer" in the Venona material. At the end of the war the British diplomat Donald Maclean was attached to the embassy in Washington, but he routinely met his Soviet case officer in New York City while visiting his pregnant wife, living there with friends. Once these facts were read by cryptanalysts in the late 1940s, it was obvious that "Homer" was Maclean. Nobody monitored the investigation more closely than Philby, the SIS liaison officer in Washington; in 1951, warned by Philby of impending arrest, Maclean slipped out of Britain with his friend and fellow spy, Guy Burgess, and defected to the Soviet Union. This was the first public act in the longest-running spy case of the cold war. The spy hunters looked for "the third man" who warned Maclean,

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[6] The details can be pursued in Peter Wright, *Spycatcher* (Viking, 1987), (reviewed by Noel Annan in *The New York Review*, September 24, 1987), and W. J. West, *The Truth About Hollis* (London: Duckworth, 1989).

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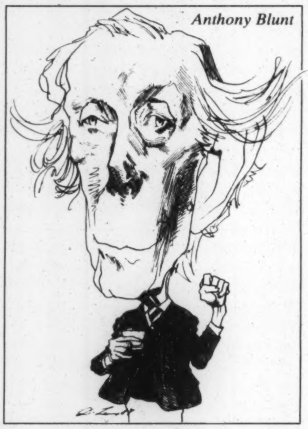
but in 1963, just when they were about to close in on Philby, he got away. Later a fourth man was identified as the art historian Anthony Blunt, and only recently a fifth man has been named. In public, that is; the counterintelligence people have known about him for years.

Verne Newton, author of a carefully researched book on Maclean and Burgess called *The Cambridge Spies*, has dug out of the US files a list of services that Maclean likely performed for the Soviets. In October 1945, for example, Maclean was in a position to tell the Russians about the American and British negotiating positions in a diplomatic struggle over rights of passage through the Dardanelles. A few months later he may have helped to block negotiations for an exchange of American loans for the use of British bases. In late 1946 information supplied by Maclean may have helped the Russians to force the Americans to publish figures for deployment of troops abroad, something the British had been anxious to avoid.

In one case Maclean apparently delivered on a grand scale. For a little over a year, between February 1947 and June 1948, Maclean had a "no-escort" pass at the Atomic Energy Commission in Washington, and he used it frequently. In the late 1940s, when "the bomb" was what Washington counted on to keep Soviet armies in Europe in check, the biggest secret about American nuclear weaponry was the number of bombs we had. That number was only very slightly above zero. When Truman sent a fleet of American bombers to Britain as a show of force at the beginning of the Berlin blockade in 1948, no bombs were aboard—only training dummies—because there were no crews to assemble them. Verne Newton argues that Maclean knew the arsenal was empty and told the KGB; and Stalin's eerie confidence while his minions seized power in Czechoslovakia and his armies risked war by closing the highways to Berlin strongly suggests that Newton is right. Maclean's information may thus have changed history.

Another episode points in a somewhat different direction. Klaus Fuchs provided the Soviets with much technical data about bomb design which got their atomic program off to a quick start, but there is nothing like discovery of a spy to arouse fear and alarm.[7] In the fall of 1949 Fuchs fell under suspicion as the result of breakouts—i.e., decrypted passages—of the Venona material; by November the Atomic Energy Commission knew he had probably been a Soviet spy, a matter of some moment because the AEC was then split over whether it was worth an all-out effort to develop hydrogen bombs and Fuchs had seen all the American work on fusion theory. Word of the case began to filter through the government. By late January 1950, when Fuchs signed a confession in London and President Truman's advisers were fighting the last battles over the H-bomb, one factor in the secret debate was the troubling thought that Fuchs had told the Russians everything we knew. Among those working out the final text of Truman's decision to go ahead was Gordon Arneson, who later wrote, "the Fuchs matter was in everyone's minds...."[8]

How much difference did it make? Fear of the Russians surely got a major boost in policy-making circles from the unfolding Fuchs case, and there is no question that fear provided the psychic energy behind the H-bomb decision. Fuchs doubtless saved the Russians time and money building their first bomb. But if the discovery that Fuchs had been a spy helped frighten the Americans into an all-out program to produce H-bombs, thereby unleashing a thirty-year arms race which bankrupted the Soviet regime in the 1980s, we may ask where was the net gain.



Anthony Blunt

Not even the most celebrated Soviet spy for the West, Oleg Penkovsky, who photographed thousands of pages of secret documents over an eighteen-month period in 1961–1962, can clearly be identified as a prime mover in a major episode of the cold war. Penkovsky is the subject of a recent book, *The Spy Who Saved the World*, by the journalist Jerrold Schecter and the KGB defector Peter Deriabin. The CIA released to them a vast collection of documents about the Penkovsky case under the Freedom of Information Act, making the book a virtually unique study of an agent and his handling, but the title is hyperbole all the same.

Penkovsky volunteered his services in early 1961, just about the time Nikita Khrushchev was mounting a major diplomatic and military effort to seize control of all of Berlin. The documents he photographed in Moscow included technical and training manuals which helped the United States to monitor with great accuracy the Soviets' progress in deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba in the fall of 1962. This information was extremely useful; it not only convinced the Americans that the missiles could reach every major American city except Seattle, but it provided a timetable of just how long it would take the Soviets to get them ready.

The Spy Who Saved the World is one of the best intelligence books in recent years, filled with surprises. One is that the US State Department and American ambassadors in Moscow were extremely timid about intelligence operations, limiting the number of CIA officers attached to the embassy and initially refusing to let them deal with Penkovsky. When one weighs this along with the embassy's pathetic failure to protect its own security, thoroughly documented by Ronald Kessler in *Moscow Station: How the KGB Penetrated the American Embassy*, one finds oneself rooting for the spooks.

In 1962 Penkovsky stopped providing information. Just how and why the CIA lost touch with him is not quite clear; the CIA refused to release counterintelligence files on the case, and Schecter and Deriabin do not have a good explanation for the fact that the Soviets photographed Penkovsky meeting a handler in January 1962 but did not arrest him until the following September. It was discrepancies like that one which led the British counterintelligence expert Peter Wright to argue heatedly what James Angleton only hinted—that even Penkovsky was a provocation, a controlled agent sent to deceive. Such arguments by their nature can go on forever.

What spies do is close to the heart of intelligence work, which may be defined as the pursuit of secret advantage. But it is important to remember that they work for vast bureaucracies at the service of foreign and defense ministries which consume information on an industrial scale. The history of the CIA as an institution has been much expanded by three recent books, two of them declassified CIA histories written for internal use, *The Central Intelligence Agency: An Instrument of Government, to 1950*, written by the Yale historian Arthur B. Darling in the 1950s, and *General Walter Bedell Smith as Director of Central Intelligence, October 1950–February 1953* by Ludwell Lee Montague. These leaden titles should not deceive the general reader; both books are written with intellectual vigor and a wealth of fascinating detail, and their footnotes identify many important documents for those young and patient enough to resort to the Freedom of Information Act. Darling, for example, gives a thorough account of the founding of the Office of Policy Coordination, the CIA's first covert arm, whose chief was to be named by the Secretary of State and approved by the National Security Council, so long as he was "acceptable" to the Director of Central Intelligence. Montague, in turn, gives a sometimes lurid account of the organizational stresses created by this weird flow chart, which ended a few years later in a forced marriage of the OPC with the Office of Special Operations.

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[7] The Fuchs case is treated at length in the *The FBI–KGB War*, and is the subject of an excellent book—*Klaus Fuchs, Atom Spy*, by Robert Chadwell Williams (Harvard University Press, 1987). The German scientist Manfred von Ardenne, who worked on the Russian bomb program for a time after the war, told me that much early theoretical work had been acquired wholesale from a spy source. Later, when they both lived in Dresden, Fuchs confirmed to Ardenne that the information had come from him. For recent developments in this case see Michael Dobbs's story in *The Washington Post*, "How Soviets Stole US Atom Secrets," October 4, 1992. From Anatoly Yatskov, the Russian who ran the ring of which Fuchs was a part, Dobbs learned of another Soviet spy at Los Alamos who began reporting as early as the spring of 1943. This spy, code-named Perseus, is still unidentified.

[8] Herbert York, *The Advisors* (W. H. Freeman, 1976; Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 69.

Also indispensable is Burton Hersh's *The Old Boys: The American Elite and the Origins of the CIA*, a portrait of a handful of men who developed a taste for intelligence work with the OSS during World War II and stayed on to fight the Russians and build the agency. No other recent intelligence book has aroused the anger of the CIA veterans as much as this one. The chief old boys, Allen Dulles and Frank Wisner, are gone, but many of their younger colleagues remain, and they particularly resent Hersh's disrespectful manner. He reconstructs several CIA failures—particularly its disastrous attempts to set up secret armies in Hungary and other parts of Eastern Europe—and his judgments are sharp and dismissive. In Hersh's account homosexuals and adulterers abound, and if anybody ever made a dumb remark or got drunk at an inopportune moment or ended up a manic depressive, Hersh is sure to have heard about it and published it. But if you want a sense of the brash confidence of the early days of the CIA, you will find much reliable information in *The Old Boys* that has seen the light nowhere else. If Hersh can be faulted it is because he gives his cast of characters hardly any of the credit they can claim for eventual American victory in the cold war.

4.

This may sound perverse. None of the spy tales recounted in recent books seems to have provided the edge for victory; the covert warriors in blackface caused much death and havoc in Southeast Asia, Cuba, and Central America but they did the US little apparent good in any of these places. The CIA's history, morever, is rich with failures to predict major events, among them the first Soviet atomic bomb, the North Korean and Chinese invasions in Korea, the Hungarian revolt, Fidel Castro's victory and Khrushchev's subsequent placement of missiles in Cuba, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the invasion of Afghanistan. Above all, the CIA failed to predict—failed even to imagine—the collapse of Soviet communism and the end of the cold war. Perry's *Eclipse* and Kessler's *Inside the CIA* both discuss this failure, beginning with a great dispute among the intelligence analysts about Soviet defense spending in the mid-1970s.

The battle was joined after the Defense Intelligence Agency interrogated a defector who said the Soviets were spending 11–12 percent of their GNP on defense, not the 5–6 percent previously claimed by the CIA. One analyst, William Lee, argued that the real figure was actually as high as 25 percent. That should have told anyone paying attention that the Soviet economy was straining toward collapse, but the analysts all drew a different conclusion—that the level of Soviet military spending must mean Moscow was still trying to conquer the world. The Soviet Union was collapsing before Robert Gates was to concede in public that it was even wobbling.

But these numerous intelligence failures proved less important in the end than the one thing the CIA over the years consistently got right. It is not the clandestine triumphs that justify the billions spent on intelligence—the purloined secrets, the foiled schemes, the embarrassments visited upon an opponent. It is the steadiness and pervasiveness of a kind of close contact which will unmistakably reveal an opponent's real capacities and approximate intentions. Intelligence services touch, watch, and listen to each other at a thousand points. The intimate knowledge revealed by the wrestler's embrace freed both sides from the ignorance, rumor, and outbreaks of panicky fear that spark big wars no one wants. The tensest moments of the cold war were the earliest, when the CIA depended on *Pravda*, on agents counting railroad boxcars, and on tourists with cameras in order to monitor what Stalin had in mind.

General Curtis LeMay, the commander of the Strategic Air Command in the 1950s, used to say that he did not intend to let his fleet of nuclear bombers be caught on the ground by a surprise attack. The go-order would be issued the instant he received "unambiguous strategic warning." Knowing that World War III would be the immediate result, high defense and White House officials in two administrations wanted to know just what "unambiguous strategic warning" was, and how LeMay would know it when he saw it. But this was a secret of intelligence tradecraft which LeMay did not feel free to share.

A few years ago the historian Gregg Herken spent an evening with LeMay. Thinking the general had perhaps mellowed with age, Herken made bold to ask just what sort of "unambiguous strategic warning" the general had been looking for. It was the old LeMay who snapped back: "You professors shouldn't get your balls in an uproar over that. *I* knew what it was."

The rest of the defense establishment did not share LeMay's confidence in his visceral judgments, and within a few years the intelligence agencies had found ways to pick up truly unambiguous signs of an impending Soviet nuclear attack. How the CIA built a global apparatus which could penetrate the "denied areas" of the Soviet Union and its allies is ably recounted in two books by Jeffrey Richelson, *American Espionage and the Soviet Target* and *America's Secret Eyes in Space*. These make it clear that what we knew about the Soviet Union came overwhelmingly from what Henry Kissinger used to call "national technical means," because it was official policy never to concede that we spied on the Russians with satellites. It was only in September 1992, in fact, that the US government at last admitted the existence and work of the National Reconnaissance Office, which operates American satellites.[9] The latest ones can look through clouds, peer sideways, see at night, and gather information in many other technically marvelous ways.

It is probably too soon to write the history of intelligence in the cold war. It is astonishing but true that no one has yet even attempted to write the history of intelligence during World War II, where it was at the very least as important as the Battle of Britain or Stalingrad, despite the fact most files—always excepting Britain's—have been released. But to get them released took decades, and prying loose the cold war files will be little easier.

When the files eventually are available, and when professional historians overcome their fear of intelligence history, they are probably going to find that the happy outcome of the cold war depended heavily on the CIA's spies, the NRO's satellites, and the NSA's monitoring of communications. But the edge was not the information we needed to win in the sense that codebreaking in World War II allowed the US Navy to defeat the Japanese in the battle of Midway. Many small victories and defeats in the cold war have explanations of that sort. But what American intelligence contributed to the outcome was something quite different—the confidence that we knew what the Soviets were up to, and could afford to contain their forays while waiting for the deep change in attitude which George Kennan had predicted back in 1947. There was an element of luck of the kind sometimes called Divine Providence in the world's close scrape with catastrophe during the cold war, but official policy also had a part in getting us through.

Intelligence on the grand scale was necessary to the policy of deterrence—the belief, often derided, by me among others, that nuclear weapons could keep the peace. But it wasn't free-floating fear of nuclear weapons that made war too scary to contemplate; it was the hard-won, detailed knowledge, held by both sides, of what nuclear weapons could do, how many there were, what they were pointed at, and the certainty that they would penetrate any defense. From the emerging history of intelligence in the cold war we learn that an arms race can be stable, and Great Powers can struggle vigorously for decades without precipitating a global bloodbath, so long as both sides are good at discovering, but not too good at hiding, the secrets that really count. ☐

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[9] *The Washington Post*, September 19, 1992.

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LETTERS

SAFE HAVENS IN BOSNIA

An Open Letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Members of the Security Council, President Bill Clinton, Members of Congress, Leaders of Citizens' Organizations Concerned with Achieving an End to the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the people of the former Yugoslavia.

Who We Are

The signers of this letter are members of an independent citizen's committee, composed of educators, lawyers, physicians, writers and others, that has been meeting under the aegis of the Center on Violence and Human Survival at John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY) to study actions that can be taken to mitigate the suffering in the former Yugoslavia. We have been moved to this commitment through a shared conviction that the global community, as well as each of us personally, must attempt to stop the atrocities being committed by all sides, and the mass rape and apparent genocide now being carried out against the Bosnian Muslim population with a ferocity unparalleled since World War II.

A Plan for Immediate Humanitarian Intercession

We propose that the immediate next step in Bosnia-Herzegovina is the establishment under United Nations supervision of Assertive Safe Havens. Safe Havens should also be established in other parts of the former Yugoslavia. Safe Havens are urgently required to put a belated halt to the killing and persecution of innocent women, children, aged, and other non-combatants, including former combatants for whom violence has become intolerable, and to sustain their lives until civil order can be restored. Our proposal requires a new United Nations force with an expanded mandate and power of enforcement. Safe Havens are necessary no matter what political settlement is finally negotiated.

Our group makes this urgent recommendation after reviewing all plans before the public relating to the restoration of peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We have consulted international lawyers, military advisers, UN officials, and informed citizens of the former Yugoslavia. It has repeatedly been pointed out to us by those with experience on the ground that the destruction throughout the former Yugoslavia has been carried out with small forces whose effect has been multiplied by the absence of a credible threat of resistance. This proposal aims to shift that balance through the measured threat and, if necessary, use of force to save lives.

The authoritative basis for Assertive Safe Havens can be found in Security Council resolutions calling for a security zone encompassing Sarajevo, and the request to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to "study the possibility and requirements of safe areas for humanitarian purposes." In addition, we read authority for Safe Havens as being within the purview of the laws of war.

The Assertive Safe Haven Proposal

(1) Acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, the Security Council would authorize the Secretary-General to declare as Safe Havens areas where populations are presently gathered. These would be established primarily in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in other affected locations as well. Potential sites for such Safe Havens are: Sarajevo, Bihac, Zenica, Srebrenica, Mostar, Tuzla, Bjelina, Goradzde, Nowy Pazar, Osijek.

(2) A new United Nations force with an "assertive" mandate and power of enforcement would be authorized to a) demilitarize the area surrounding each Safe Haven, placing heavy weapons under effective supervision; b) disarm the populations in the areas designated as Safe Havens; c) seek out and lead to safety non-combatants outside the protected area who desire entry to a Safe Haven; and d) use appropriate force to defend themselves, their charges, and carry out the mandate.

(3) We estimate that 50,000 or fewer troops could effectively carry out the project of establishing Assertive Safe Havens. To ensure the multilateral nature of the force, no more than 25% of the total number of troops would be supplied by any single nation at a given time.

(4) The creation of Safe Havens would not rely on the permission of paramilitary forces or other local authorities. The humanitarian consideration of saving of human lives takes a higher priority. On the other hand, the Safe Havens as conceived do not require massive dislocation and movement of population. Thus a credible, yet limited, international armed force is envisaged.

(5) The establishment of Assertive Safe Haven zones would not impose long-term political solutions. The Safe Havens would pragmatically offer immediate security and reliable humanitarian relief to populations already trapped or taking refuge in the protected sites.

(6) In keeping with a mandate to assertively promote humanitarian relief in the Safe Havens, the United Nations would invite appropriate UN agencies and humanitarian organizations to assist in the administration of certain functions in the Safe Havens, such as the distribution of food, the provision of medical care, and psychological counseling.

Conclusion

This proposal for the creation of Assertive Safe Havens should be seen as a temporary authority establishing civil order. Safe Havens are not intended to be used as a basis for shaping the future map of the former Yugoslavia, though their establishment would improve the chances for a lasting peace. Once the Safe Havens are secure, Serbs, Muslims, and Croats will have diminished motive to resist a settlement.

We believe a clear distinction should be drawn between massive military intervention, which we do not favor, and the establishment of Assertive Safe Havens. We have been advised by those we have consulted that the task of creating Safe Havens in areas where populations are now gathered is practical, and will not expose that force to intolerable risks. We recognize that our proposal entails risks. But the ongoing genocide obligates the world community to assume responsibility for creative humanitarian action.

We urge those to whom this letter is addressed to actively support and implement the idea of Assertive Safe Havens. We urge our fellow citizens to endorse and support this proposal so that together we may act to resolve a crisis that appalls and shames all people of conscience.

Citizens' Committee on Bosnia-Herzegovina
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
New York City

Janet Coleman
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'THE LONDON HANGED'

To the Editors:

Sir Keith objects to my argument in *The London Hanged* [*NYR*, November 19] that the gallows were central to the labor discipline of capitalism, because more people were hanged in pre-industrial than industrial England. But are industrialization and capitalism the same thing? There was plenty of capitalism before the factory and the steam engine. This was axiomatic to an earlier generation of historians such as Paul Mantoux and R.H. Tawney, and behind them to Karl Marx. First, they explained that capitalism existed in the domestic mode of production and in the manufacture stage, called now proto-industrialization. Second, we must add, in the factories of west Africa and in the machinery of the Caribbean sugar mills it becomes clear that the power of English capital to command labor long preceded industrialization.

To read his characterizations of *The London Hanged* as "careless in detail," "frequently careless with names and references," "worryingly unreliable" causes me grief. Four times Sir Keith generalizes, and three times he provides no evidence at all. Coming as it does from an historian known for his voluminous citation of examples, I note that he finds only a single instance, and he gets that one wrong. It is the case of the unhappy John Masland.

"There are many omissions which have the effect of putting the accused in a more favorable light and their prosecutors in a harsher one," he charges. He criticizes me for informing the reader that Masland was an unemployed sailor while omitting that he "was hanged for rape and had been guilty of child abuse, infecting his own daughter with a venereal disease." It is true I do not bring this up. Sir Keith finds Masland guilty on reading the Ordinary's *Account of the Malefactors Executed at Tyburn*. Had Sir Keith read Masland's trial perhaps he would not have been so quick to judgment. At the trial, on three different occasions Masland said, "I am as innocent as an Angel." Was he? Opinions varied then, and they may vary now. In any event, it was not my business to try him again. Why does Sir Keith?

But I cannot leave the matter there. Sir Keith does some omitting of his own. In fact I do not write about Masland merely that he was unemployed. I write of his employment: "John Masland was a man who had spent most of his working life in the Guinea trade, and he looked it. A hatchet scar across his face was the result of a mutiny and shipboard slave rebellion." I should not have thought that this was to slant the evidence in favor of the accused. Does Sir Keith? If so, what exactly is it about the slave trade that is favorable? It seems that Masland had a relation, a merchant in the City, involved in this trade. He was apprehended at the hanging of another sailor of the slave trade.

Does Sir Keith assume that it is more favorable to be a sailor in the slave trade than to abuse his homeless daughter? Does he think it more favorable to suppress violently a slave rebellion than to befoul his family with venereal disease? Why compare them? Surely, it is not a question of what is favorable or harsh in the case. This is simple-minded moralism. The question is understanding a violent syndrome, fueled by alcoholism, of huge profit to City merchants, of lasting consequence to three continents, and producing sick and diseased men whose cruelty has been a violent scourge to those weaker. Owing to its methodology *The London Hanged* can avoid such moralizing which it leaves to magistrates, jurors, the Ordinaries, and Oxford dons. Moralizing, whether it is pity or condemnation, has a way of putting an end to investigation.

Sir Keith admits that his knowledge of the Ordinary's *Accounts* is casual, but he is wrong to imply that mine is. I have collected them for modern scholarship, and I have evaluated them as a source of historical knowledge in "The Ordinary of Newgate and His *Account*" in J. S. Cockbur (ed.), *Crime in England 1550–1800* (Princeton 1977). Sir Keith accepts the Ordinary's language, a discourse based upon the triumph of private property. It is not that I challenge this, but that, as an historian, I bring forth evidence that the propertyless challenged it, and they were criminalized for doing so.

Sir Keith is an eminent historian of the 16th and 17th centuries, but his touch is unsure in the 18th century. Jack Sheppard was not a highwayman, as he writes, but a burglar. He writes of "Tyburn prison" and there was no such place. In confusing Tyburn, the site of hangings until 1783, with Newgate prison, three miles away, he omits the municipal salience of the procession of the condemned across the town. What on earth does he mean by "unofficial perquisites"? There is a complex argument here that Sir Keith is only partly familiar with. It is notorious how weak Marx is on the subject, at least in his chapter on wages in *Capital*. And why does Sir Keith speak of "the poor" so? It is a gentry-made locution.

Finally, may I say that in comparing my book with Linda Colley's, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, Sir Keith misses an opportunity to explore the relationship between patriotism and private property, or between the Nation and the gallows? Whose Britain was it and to whom was it Great? These are the unanswered questions of this review.

Peter Linebaugh

Brookline, Massachusetts

Keith Thomas *replies*:

I am sorry that Mr. Linebaugh has been upset by my review of *The London Hanged*. I tried to give a fair and honest impression of a book which seemed to me stimulating and often original, but sometimes perverse in argument and careless in detail. I must, though, plead guilty at once to two of his charges. Jack Sheppard was, of course, a burglar; it was Dick Turpin, mentioned in the same sentence, who was the highwayman. I am afraid that the description got transposed in the typing. "Tyburn prison" was not my term, but an editorial insertion into my text. I am sure that my knowledge of the eighteenth century leaves a lot to be desired, but I am not as ignorant as that.

Otherwise, I think that Mr. Linebaugh protests too much. I see nothing wrong with the expression "unofficial perquisites" to indicate appropriations which the workers made as if of right, but which employers refused to recognize, or with "the poor" as an objective description of a large segment of the eighteenth-century population. As for John Masland, I would not presume to judge his guilt or innocence. I merely noted that he was convicted of a sexual crime which Mr. Linebaugh chose not to mention, but which surely helped to determine Masland's fate.

Mr. Linebaugh asks, rather masochistically, for more evidence of his carelessness with details. Let me confine myself to cases in which his text omits or misrenders passages in the Ordinary of Newgate's *Account* in such a way as to put the accused in a more favorable light. My copy of *The London Hanged* is heavily annotated with examples which I excluded from my review out of consideration for your readers. For instance, I did not think that they would want to know that James Appleton was hanged for stealing not just three wigs, but also two suits, six guineas, and other goods (p. 130); that Mary Cut-and-Come-Again was hanged not merely for stealing an apron worth 6d, but also for assaulting a woman on the highway and putting her in fear, and for stealing an apron worth 3/-, a shift worth 12d, and a mob cap (p. 145); that Sarah Allen did not suffocate her infant in the workhouse, but threw the baby out of a window in Holborn and was sent to the workhouse when arrested, and that she was not forced to leave her job when she became pregnant (p. 148); that William Brown was not "cast off" his lands in Wiltshire, but spent beyond his income and had to give up his lease (p. 185); that the dowry brought by the wife of George Robins was £300 not £30 (p. 185); that the reason for John Tarlton's unemployment was that he had idled his time and taken up with "loose women" (p. 254); that John Lancaster did not make the remark attributed to him (p. 258); that James Buquois was not out of work, but had a job as a bricklayer's assistant and fell into bad company (p. 258); that John Ross was a house-breaker not a highway robber, and did not have a wife and three children (pp. 258–259); that Patrick Bourn (not Brown) was hanged for stealing a watch worth £3 and money, not just his employer's spurs (p. 295); that Patrick Hayes was hanged not merely for stealing keys and spectacles, but for letting in thieves to rob his mistress's house and assault her and her maid (p. 295); that William Bruce stole money as well as a wig and a silk handkerchief (p. 295); and that only one of these people appears in Mr. Linebaugh's index.

I could prolong this tedious list, though I have checked only a tiny portion of Mr. Linebaugh's book. If he really wants more examples of this sort of thing he can easily compile them for himself by comparing his text against the sources on which it is based.

I should stress that none of this detracts from the larger intellectual interest of Mr. Linebaugh's book, which is considerable. Historians will continue to discuss the many important general issues which he raises and they will look with fresh eyes at the material he has unearthed. But authors who put forward controversial arguments are well advised to follow the ancient advice (given by another Oxford don, I am afraid) that they should always verify their references.

MURDER IN TURKEY

To the Editors:

We are appalled that, since January 1992, thirteen journalists have been murdered in Turkey in what appear to be reprisals for having exercised their right to freedom of expression and information; a right guaranteed under international law which the Turkish government is bound to uphold and protect.

Responsibility for one of these murders has been claimed by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK). Of ten others, there are strong suspicions that the State was involved, and in particular there is clear evidence of State involvement in the murders of Halit Gungen and Izzet Kezer.

We are deeply concerned that the Turkish government has failed to pursue with adequate vigor investigations into these murders and by the denial—in some cases—that those killed were in fact journalists. Failure to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice not only means that the killers remain free to commit further murders, but it conveys an ominous signal that the killing of journalists is acceptable practice.

The right to freedom of expression and information is a precious right, vital for the protection of all other human rights and as a foundation for democracy. We urge the Turkish government to demonstrate its commitment to this right by doing all in its power to bring to justice those responsible for the thirteen deaths and to prevent further attacks of any kind on media professionals in Turkey.

We call on the Turkish government to comment on this matter and above all to put into practice specific measures and actions to better protect the right to seek, receive and impart information in Turkey.

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Rose Styron
William Styron
Kurt Vonnegut

CORRECTION

The following quotation in Alfred Kazin's review of Robert Hughes's *Culture of Complaint* (*NYR*, April 22) should have been attributed to Mr. Hughes:

> Complaint gives you power.... Not to be aware of a miserable childhood is prima facie evidence, in the eyes of Recovery, of "denial"—the assumption being that everyone had one, and is thus a potential source of revenue. The cult of the abused Inner Child has a very important use in modern America: it tells you that personal grievance transcends political utterance, and that the upward production curve of maudlin narcissism need not intersect with the descending spiral of cultural triviality. Thus the pursuit of the Inner Child has taken over just at the moment when Americans ought to be figuring out where their Inner Adult is.

AVAILABLE!

The English-language edition of the book of talks with Molotov reviewed in the March 25 issue will be published by Ivan R. Dee, Inc., in the autumn. In addition, *The Shah and I: The Confidential Diary of Iran's Royal Court, 1969–1977* by Asadollah Alam (reviewed in the April 8 issue) will be available from St. Martin's Press in May.

QUERY

To the Editors:

For a book about the relationship between Lillian Hellman and Dashiell Hammett, I would appreciate hearing from anyone who might wish to contribute letters, anecdotes, or reminiscences about both or either of the two.

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